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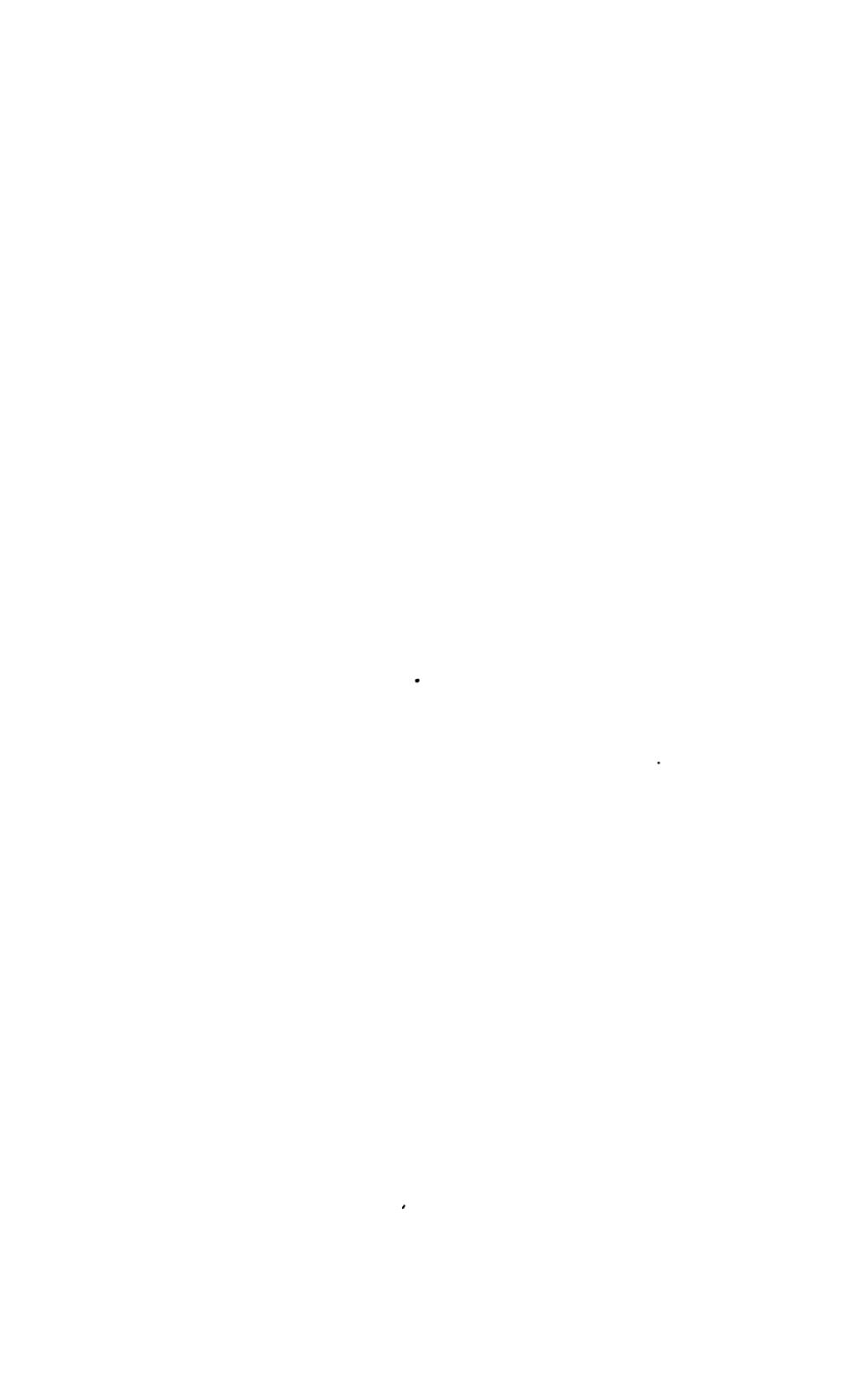
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*New-York, July, 1835.*

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# MY LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"STORIES OF WATERLOO," "WILD SPORTS OF THE WEST."

&c. &c. &c.

*Sir Anthony.*—Come here, sirrah! who the devil are you?  
*Capt. Absolute.*—Faith! sir, I'm not quite clear myself: but I'll endeavour to recollect.

*The Rivals.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

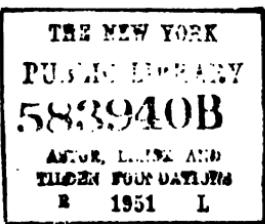
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## INTRODUCTION.

*Egeon*.—Why look you strange on me? You know me well.

*Ant. E.*.—I never saw you in my life till now.

*Comedy of Errors.*

I HAD been delicate from infancy—and the enervating effects of an unhealthy climate obliged me to retire upon half-pay, and quit Ceylon for England, to try if native air would restore a shattered constitution. I came to London for medical advice; and while my physician was anxious that I should continue immediately under his eye, he recommended me, for amusement and exercise, to make frequent excursions around the British capital.

No advice could be more congenial to “a truant disposition.” I, who had been buffeted about the world from my boyhood, willingly became a roamer after health; and in the vicinity of the metropolis there were few spots unvisited in the course of my valetudinary wanderings.

Every suburban retirement—every scene of holiday dissipation—every signboard which a cockney treasures in the tablet of his memory, is familiar to me. I have spent weeks upon the river and the road, become resident in steam-boats and stages, witnessed many an adventure, consorted with strange companions, and become extensively acquainted with the whole family of man.

It was a sultry day, and I was sitting in the bay-window of the Pier Hotel at Gravesend, contemplating the unceasing bustle that Father Thames presented. The steamer was to return to town at five, and I rang the bell to order dinner, and thus fill up an interval of two mortal hours. The gentleman of the napkin appeared, produced his *carte*, and eulogized the contents of the larder,—for there, as he averred, every thing eatable in August would be found. He added, that dinner was just being served at the *table d'hôte* below; and probably, rather than dine *tout seul*, I would prefer uniting myself to the party. Undoubtedly I would. I seized my hat and cane, and following as true a descendant of Hal's “*Fancia*,”

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as ever "served a long lease to the clinking of pewter," entered the public room and joined the company.

The party amounted to a dozen, of whom a moiety were of the gentler sex. All, with one exception, were denizens of cockayne and inhabitants of the Modern Babylon. They were all and every, no doubt, "good men and true;" of excellent reputation upon 'Change, and exemplary in their private relations; cherishing their wives, and correcting their children, as became citizens of character and credit. The ladies were fat and comely, and one of them positively handsome. She was a fine, joyous, and laughter-loving dame, with teeth exquisitely white and the blackest eyes in Bishopsgate-street. I saw her steal from beneath her pink silk bonnet an *espègle* glance at the stranger; and then, probably checked by the proximity of her liege lord, she turned her eyes demurely on the tablecloth.

Mr. Hopkins, when he espoused one so young and pretty as she of the pink bonnet, was certainly a bold man. He might easily have had an older daughter; and was moreover a short and bilious gentleman, neither in face nor figure designed by nature for a lady-killer. If it be true that men in this life are sometimes by the agency of their helpmates qualified for a state of beatitude above, I should conclude, from the looks of his lady, that Mr. H. was certain of a place in heaven.

I mentioned that one of the party was a stranger to the rest. He was a tall, stout, devil-may-care, dark-whiskered fellow: I never heard a more decided brogue—I never met a wilder-looking gentleman. He was fashionably dressed, apparently on excellent terms with himself, and dying to be very intimate with the rest of the company. He placed himself *vis-à-vis* to the fair citizen; and, more than once, I detected a furtive glance stealing underneath the pink bonnet when Mr. Hopkins was otherwise engaged.

Dinner proceeded: the citizens ate gallantly—the stranger rattled on—graciously the pink dame smiled—and all were occupied according to their respective fancies. Mrs. Hopkins was indubitably "a fine animal;" but—may the Lord pardon her!—she used a knife with fish, and swilled "botled stout" like a Life Guardsman.

When people are limited in time, it is marvellous how expeditiously they contrive to get on. I never met a company who drank fairer: sherry disappeared, brandy and *blue ruin* succeeded; the day was hot—the ladies thirsty: all had come out "on pleasure bent," and hilarity was the order of the

## INTRODUCTION.

v

day. Mr. Hopkins's cheek was losing its lemon tint insensibly, and acquiring the true *couleur de rose*; and I fancied that his wife's eyes every moment became blacker and brighter. Alas! it was a sun-gleam before a tempest.—Suddenly, he bounded from his seat like a racket-ball, and, with a deep imprecation, declared vengeance against my next neighbour, the wild-looking gentleman.

Up rose the company *en masse*. They were all married, and therefore made common cause. There was a deceiver in the room—a Giovanni in the presence—for the stranger, not contented with looking “things unutterable,” had actually attempted to establish a pedal communication with her of the pink bonnet; and, confound his awkwardness! he pressed the wrong foot.

It was unpardonable in the wild-looking gentleman. I felt for Mr. Hopkins. Had the delinquent trodden upon my toe, he would have been my destroyer; for I was afflicted with tight shoes and angry corns.

Never did a company appear more unanimous in denouncing a deceiver. At the audacious attempt the gentlemen were irate; and at the bungling execution the ladies were indignant—no wonder! If people will press feet, let them tread upon the right ones.

All and every assumed a hostile attitude, and assault and battery appeared to be the order of the day. An irritated drysalter from Tooley-street commenced buttoning his coat—and the whole corps seemed to be combining their efforts for a general onslaught.

Nor was the wild-looking gentleman insensible to coming events. I never saw a person more disinclined to submit quietly to martyrdom; and, seizing the poker, he bade a bold defiance to his assailants. The thickest skull has but a sorry chance against “cold iron,” and none of the angry citizens, although doubtless men of approved courage, volunteered to lead the assault. I took advantage of the lull, offered my mediation, and the stranger was permitted to explain. The offence was perfectly accidental—a cramp caused the mischief—Mr. Hopkins was appeased, harmony restored, and a fresh supply of liquids promptly ordered and produced.

How long the armistice would continue unbroken, I did not pretend to guess. The steamer's bell sounded its note of preparation; Cockneys by the dozen flocked on board; the paddles revolved briskly, and I went splashing up to

town, leaving the wild-looking gentleman to "complete his destinies."

Months passed; autumn was over, and a murky atmosphere with drizzling rain told that it was a London November.—I was returning from dinner to my lodgings, when, at the corner of a dark mews, I was hustled by several men, who commenced a simultaneous research into my pockets. Unluckily, I had that evening more cash upon my person than I felt inclined to part with; and accordingly offered a sturdy resistance. But it would have been unavailing, had not a stranger suddenly crossed the street and hurried to the rescue. He was indeed a powerful ally; down went a couple of the Philistines—off ran the rest and I escaped spoliation. I turned to thank my deliverer, and in the stout stranger recognized my quondam friend, the wild-looking gentleman!

Nor had I been forgotten: he recognized my voice, tucked me under his arm, and we proceeded to a neighbouring tavern. We supped, and over a midnight glass I recalled to his memory the dinner at Gravesend, and asked him how he had subsequently progressed. He smiled and informed me he had found favour in the sight of Mr. Hopkins, accompanied that party to town, and had been invited to visit them in Bishopsgate-street. In my opinion Mr. Hopkins was wrong.

We remained in conversation until a late hour. My friend was leaving London next day, but promised to find me out on his return. We separated, he having presented me with his card, on which was engraven "Captain John Blake."

Spring came, and I had heard nothing of my deliverer, when one morning, in "The Times," I saw his marriage regularly gazetted; and, joyful intelligence! it was declared that the lady of his love was passing fair, and rich as an Israelite. After an elaborate account of the dresses and *déjeûner*, it was farther intimated, that the happy pair had returned to town, and were now resident at Ibbotson's. And had the wild-looking gentleman actually become a Benedict, and an heiress committed her happiness to his custody? My curiosity was roused—I longed to learn the history of his good fortune from himself; it would be but civil to offer my congratulations; and, next day, I drove to Vere-street, and sent up my card.

My friend was out, but the servant informed me that his lady was visible. I was paraded to the drawing-room, announced as an old acquaintance, and found myself in the presence of the loveliest girl, that ever vowed obedience at the altar.

I have during my march through life gazed on many a beauty, but never did I view a sweeter expression of artless loveliness, than the bride's face presented when she blushingly received my congratulations. In conversation she was easy and intelligent, and before a quarter of an hour I came to a conclusion, that matrimony may be endured; and that in the lottery of life the wild-looking gentleman possessed, as they say in Connaught, "the luck of thousands."

Our *tête-à-tête* was so agreeable, that time slipped on unnoticed. I heard the door unclose, and observed the bride's eyes lighten, as she said in a soft voice, "It is my husband." I sprang up to welcome my fortunate friend; but in a moment started back in dismay—I had caught a stranger by the hand, and intruded, under false pretences, upon the privacy of a gentleman to whom I was entirely unknown.

I never found myself in a more embarrassing situation, and attempted, of course, a blundering apology, while the stranger politely requested me to sit down. It was, indeed, a ridiculous mistake. In name and rank there was certainly a strange coincidence; while, stranger still, in age and personal appearance, the Benedict of Ibbotson's might pass as twin brother to the admirer of Mrs. Hopkins.

I noticed this singularity.

"And may I ask," said the stranger, "where you met this duplicate of mine?"

I told him.

"How might he have been engaged on these occasions?"

"On the first, in making love; on the second in threshing pickpockets."

"I fancy I know your friend," said the stranger. "Would you favour me with the particulars of these adventures?"

I consented; and during the recital he laughed immoderately, while the bride appeared to be equally amused.

"Well, sir," he observed when my narrative was ended, "my acquaintance is in truth my loving cousin"—one who in name and resemblance is said to be my counterpart, but whom, I suppose either for sake of distinction, or from his superior vivacity, it has pleased his associates to designate as 'Jack the Devil.'

I groaned;—the identity was proven, and the *sobriquet* indubitably belonged to my worthy friend, the wild-looking gentleman.

"Good God!" I exclaimed, "how stupid and unpardonable must this intrusion of mine appear!"

"Far from it," said the bridegroom; "I have heard of you repeatedly from my kinsman; and Colonel \_\_\_\_\_'s name is quite familiar to Emily and me. Will you wave ceremony, and break our matrimonial *tête-à-tête*? and after dinner I will give you the last intelligence which has reached me of our excellent countryman, 'Jack the Devil!'"

Little inducement was requisite to make me accept his invitation; and from that day, I date the commencement of a friendship that promises only to terminate with life. I have been for months together domesticated with my friends, and, during morning rides and evening potations, collected those details of personal adventure, which, *mutato nomine*, and with slight omissions, the following memoir so faithfully records.

LONDON, MARCH, 1835.

# MY LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### MY BIRTH.

*King Henry.* Is the queen delivered ?  
*Lady.* Say, aye ; and of a boy.  
Aye, aye, my liege ;  
And of a lovely boy.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was a wild and blustrous night in the month of February, in the year of Grace, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine—The jail-clock struck one. My father's household had long since retired to their respective dormitories, and a solitary watch-light twinkled in the chamber-window where my mother slept. All was quiet as a regular sou-wester would permit. Doors creaked, windows rattled, while the wind, eddying in hollow gusts through narrow lanes and gateways, came roaring awfully down the chimneys. There were no passengers abroad, for the foul weather had cleared the streets effectually of their usual gang of nocturnal wanderers ; and the veriest drunkard appeared to have anticipated the storm, and managed to stagger home before the fury of the gale was at its height. The ancient elms which overhung the road leading from the barracks to the jail, groaned fearfully above the picket, as with great coats buttoned to their noses, they hurried to their guard-room from patrolling—the sentries kept snug within their boxes—and in all Castlebar but one man could be discovered out of doors, and he, as it will appear, was a dead one.

Just then, a figure might have been observed moving hastily across my mother's chamber. Presently the bell rang ; the warning peal was repeated ; a loud and peremptory voice aroused the sleeping servants ; and, without even waiting to bless himself, Mark Haggarty slipped on his red-plush breeches, tumbled over a turf creel, which the housemaid, for better convenience, had judiciously laid across the passage, and as he gathered himself up, in tones which told how desperately he was alarmed, ejaculated, “*Blessed Virgin ! is the house coming down?*”

"The mistress is ill," exclaimed my father. "Run for Doctor Donovan. Take the short way across the Mall, and be back again like lightning."

"Why then, by my own soul, I won't," returned he of the red-plush breeches. "Me crass the Mall, and Kimlin swinging on a tree! *Mona mondiaoul*,\* if I would take a hatfull of pound-notes and venture. But I'll cut round the lane and raise the doctor in a jiffy."

Accordingly, without waiting for his other habiliments, Mark Haggarty bolted out of the door, and started at a killing pace, upholding with his better hand, the solitary garment by the waistband.

Meanwhile the whole establishment was in general commotion. Half-a-score of domestics, male and female, in that interesting and unadorned state when beauty is said to be most bewitching, careered over the house, and tilted against each other in the lobbies. The men cursed, and the women crossed themselves; lights flared, dogs barked, boys kicked them for the same, and the uproar within, beat the storm without, all to nothing. At this moment Mark Haggarty returned "fairly kilt wid runnin," to announce the advent of the doctor, so soon as Biddy Boyle, his favourite hand-maiden, could manage "to shake him into his clothes."

Let critics say what they please, in the best biographies, digressions will be frequent; and even at this eventful period I must leave my mother to her fate, while I put my readers in possession of certain matters, which I deem necessary to illustrate and connect these memoirs.

Every body who is aware that this history commences in 1799, will recollect that the rebellion had occurred during the preceding summer, and that although the insurrection had been suppressed, the country was still fearfully disturbed, and especially by ruffians who had been in arms with the disaffected, and who, having been excluded from mercy by their crimes, had still contrived to elude the hand of justice, and exist by terrorism and plunder. At this time martial-law was in full force; Denis Browne reigned in undisputed supremacy; his sway over the north-western division of the kingdom of Connaught was absolute, as if he had formed an integral fraction of the Holy Alliance; and his autocracy over "the finest peasantry on earth," not inferior even to that of Mr. Daniel O'Connel, whom God long preserve! With the persons and properties of his subjects

\* An Irish imprecation.

Denis took occasional liberties, loosing and binding as he pleased—and when example was thought preferable to precept, hanging a delinquent “out of the face,” for the general benefit of the body politic. True it is, that in after day, short-sighted politicians have questioned the utility of the gallows, and even mooted the authority of the defunct Denis to employ it as he did. But these important questions are not for us to decide, and we shall consign them accordingly to the future historian.

Three days before the opening of this story, an occurrence took place which procured for the worthy citizens of Castlebar the unexpected pleasure of witnessing an execution. An outlaw named Kimlin who had escaped the general slaughter which visited the rebel allies when the French surrendered at Ballinamuck, had infested the country for the last winter at the head of a numerous and ferocious band. He was a daring, desperate scoundrel—and, rendered confident by his previous success in evading the many attempts that had been made to arrest him, imprudently ventured within a short distance of the town, and appeared at a bridal dance which was given in a neighbouring village. As a reward of one hundred pounds had been offered for his apprehension, it is not surprising that his propinquity to the town was speedily communicated, and a few of the yeomanry, having ascertained the house where he would harbour for the night, marched hastily to the spot, and surrounded and attacked it. Although surprised, Kimlin made a desperate resistance: the leader of the party was shot through the heart, two others severely wounded, and it was not until the house was in flames and the outlaw's ammunition expended, that he could be overpowered and secured. Tied upon a car, with the dead yeoman placed beside him, Kimlin was conveyed by his captors in triumph to Castlebar. The party proceeded directly with their prisoner to the court-house, where Denis Browne was at the moment sitting in judgment, upon a broken head incurred at a recent hurling match.

When the important event was communicated to the autocrat of Mayo, that the felon who had evaded pursuit so long was at last within his power, the hurlers, plaintiff and defendant, were most unceremoniously ejected from the bar of justice. Kimlin, pinioned and guarded by a yeoman with a naked bayonet at either side, was placed at the foot of the table, directly opposite to the arm-chair where Denis Browne was seated; the dead body was deposited outside in the lob-

by ; and one of the captors desired to state briefly the particulars of the morning adventure.

While this ceremony was proceeding, Kimlin, with a dogged resolution, listened in sullen silence to his accuser. The detail ended, Denis turning upon the undaunted felon a look that would have quailed the stoutest heart, demanded to know the names and haunts of his companions. But the robber spoke not, and met the eye of his judge with a scowl of deadly hatred.

"Dost thou hear me, ruffian ? Answer at once, and truly, or before the sun is at its height you shall dangle on yonder tree," and he pointed to a tall elm, whose bare and ragged boughs were visible from the court-house window.

Kimlin looked up ; it was a look that united fiendish scorn with unflinching desperation.

"Not so fast, Right Honourable,"\* said the robber with a sneer : "you'll bring me to the drum-head, I suppose, at any rate—and, with all your hurry, you'll scarcely strap me up till sunset. As to my comrades, they are who they are; and for their haunts, why, look till ye find them, and then you'll not have lost the labour."

The judge smiled bitterly. "Think ye, friend," he replied, "that a murderer and armed rebel, with the blood of the king's trusty soldiers on his hands, shall cumber the earth till he undergoes the forms of law intended for better regulated subjects?" He paused, and taking out his watch, examined the dial attentively, and whispered the jailor beside him, who directly left the room ; then, in a voice as cold and passionless as if he was ordering his carriage to the door, he thus continued : "Kimlin, it wants five minutes to eleven ; at twelve you dangle upon yonder elm," and he pointed with his finger to the tree.

"Devil may care !" replied the undaunted ruffian : "will ye let me have a priest ?"

His wish was granted ; and a messenger despatched for the confessor. In a few minutes, and by different doors, two functionaries entered the chamber, and placed themselves at either side of the doomed murderer.

The first of these was an old grey-haired man, whose coat of dingy black, and long coarse horse-skin boots, announced him to be a travelling friar. He crossed himself while addressing the prisoner, and muttered to him from time to time some Latin formulæ, interspersed with admonitory observa-

\* The title by which Denis was universally known.

tions, inculcating the necessity of speedy repentance, and the making of his peace with God.

The other was a very different personage. He was a tall negro, with a face of amazing ugliness, and frame of gigantic proportions. His dress was of that peculiar and remarkable costume with which the time-beaters in military bands are generally invested. He had large rings in his ears, and a crooked sabre at his side, while his turban or cap, formed of red and yellow calico, added at least eighteen inches to his height. But, striking as his dress and figure were, on one thing the undivided observation of the spectators was directed—and that was a small coil of rope which he carried in his hand, having one end simply knotted, while the other was provided with an eye, spliced with a neatness that told the negro had been once a sailor.

"Sambo," said the judge with an encouraging nod, "we require a cast of your craft this morning; and, like a good and provident workman, you have not forgotten your tools."

The negro's lips divided, and his grin disclosed a set of teeth firm and white as the tusks of a boar-hound.

"Hegh, massa! me alway ready; but rope has broke a strand;" and pointing out the frayed part, he directed a careless look to the convict, who had retired to a corner with the confessor—"Me want new rope; him there not tall, but dam heavy."

"It will do, Sambo—it will do;" said the justice, with a smile.

"But," returned the executioner, "Massa Browne, me not paid last job. Him jailor there, him dam rogue; him promise a one pound-note, besides the clothes."

"Ay, Snowball," replied the accused, "and did ye not get every rag that Conolly had on, with every thing in the pockets, and that into the bargain?"

"Hegh, heghe!" and the sable functionary grinned, "great matter that! Him had not'ing in him pocket but thread and thimble; him clothes not worth a broken drum-stick—all tore, though himself was a tailor. Beside, this here a dam place. No one will buy dead man's clothes, for fear him ghost come at night to claim them;" and Sambo laughed heartily, in which the judge and jailor joined.

While this conversation was carried on at the table, the felon and the churchman, were busily employed in the corner of the room. Between religious exercises, the friar was endeavouring to extract a confession, which Kimlin appeared

to make reluctantly, as his replies were given in hasty and querulous tones.

"Did I not tell ye I was there already?" was his answer to the priest's question.

Again the friar whispered—"No," returned the convict, "Connor, that was hung in Foxford, fired the shot that killed him."

"Who murdered Peter Donovan?" said the confessor.

"How do I know? I was in Roscommon the night it happened."

"You fired at Mr. O'Roark," observed the priest.

"Well, if I did, I missed him—and more's the pity."

"Were you not at Marley's robbery?" asked the friar.

"Arrah! ye bother one wid questionin'—I was, and I'll tell ye no more!"

"Well, attend to me," replied the friar; "are ye sorry for your crimes, and do ye heartily repent?"

"I'll tell ye what I repint most," said the villain, with a ferocious oath; "and that is, that I had'nt more cartridges, and by —, I would have shot as many of them blood-hounds," and he pointed to the yeomen, "as would have covered that table, and it's a long one—and now will ye give me the rites?"

"I'll give you *the rope!*!" exclaimed the judge, who had overheard the sanguinary declaration—"Away with him at once; and before twelve strikes, let me see him strapped up!"

Immediately the captors seized the prisoner, and the black drummer resumed his coil, which he had deposited on the table.

"Massa Browne," said the sable artist, "mind, two poun' due now; me come back for money when the job done—me have child to cristin—him beauty—black as a crow—colour of him father—him beauty :" and Sambo showed his white tusks as he laughed heartily. At the door the convict paused, turned on the judge a look of undying hatred—"May my curse light upon you and yours, Denis Browne!" he ejaculated; then clinching his teeth together, without murmuring another word, he doggedly accompanied his escort.

The look and imprecation were not lost on the person to whom they were addressed. They produced no other effect, however, than eliciting a bitter and sarcastic smile; and in ten minutes, Denis Browne was calmly contemplating from his window the agonized struggles of the expiring robber.

It was determined that the body should be suspended for

several days, as a wholesome example to the "mauvais sujets" of the neighbourhood ; and, accordingly a manifesto to that effect was issued by the "Right Honourable." Aware that Kimlin's gang were in the vicinity of the town, and that they would naturally wish to remove their deceased leader, precautionary measures were adopted to protect the corpse against any attempt at abstraction. As the Mall was directly opposite the jail, of course the fatal tree was visible to the sentries round the prison. It was, therefore, intimated to the guard, that Mr. Kimlin was placed under their especial *surveillance*, and that to the living criminals beneath their charge, they had received the addition of a dead one.

Three days passed, and every thing went on as usual. Mayo was minus a robber, and Sambo richer by two pound-notes and a suit of clothes. Kimlin ceased to be a lion—the maid-servants were tired of admiring him—and there was not a nurse for miles around, who had not gratified her infant charge with an exhibition of the departed murderer. To Sambo alone the sight was still an interesting one, and this was from a pardonable vanity. Every evening, at tattoo, while exercising the large drum, as he passed underneath the tree that bore his handy-work, he grinned as he looked up, and remarked to the mulatto who operated on the tambourine beside him, "Hegh, Bill, him robber well hung; dam good hemp too, or two strands would never hold so big a villain up;" and his vigorous stick would descend with additional force upon the sheep-skin. Enough for example had now been done ; and it was decided that, on the next day, Kimlin should be committed to his mother earth.

We have already described the evening as stormy. At midnight the gale was awful, and the sentries, as they peered from their boxes, could occasionally observe through the gloom, the body of the dead outlaw oscillating wildly back and forward in every blast of wind. Within the prison, the jail-guard were circled round a blazing turf fire; yet it was in truth a cold and dreary watch ; and Sergeant O'Tool feeling an unusual chilliness of the stomach, despatched private Rafferty to procure some whiskey to correct the same, precisely at the moment when the accoucheur departed from his house, hurrying to the assistance of my mother.

Now, Doctor Donovan was well skilled in pharmacy and obstetrics—but, moreover, he was an adept in freemasonry, and a worthy professor of that ancient and honourable craft. That night he had presided over "the enlightened few," and

whether obnubilated by the arcana of the mysterious science, confused by Mark Haggarty's alarm, or bothered by the storm, he could never himself discover; but certain it is, that totally oblivious of Mr. Kimlin being suspended in the Mall, he took the short cut, which he of the red-plush breeches had so judiciously avoided.

Before the doctor sallied forth, Biddy Boyle, to the best of her abilities, endeavoured to secure him against the inclemency of the weather. She encased him in a large coat; his face was defended to the very eyes by a shawl; a silk bandana, tied below his chin, prevented his hat from levanting; while a horseman's cloak over all, appeared to set the tempest at defiance.

While the doctor continued under the shelter of the houses, he progressed gallantly, but the corner turned, he then experienced the fury of the gale. Short and corpulent, he presented a square and compact surface to the action of the wind, which being in nautical *parlance*, "right aft," hurried him along with astonishing velocity. He had reached the centre of the trees, when a squall raised the capes of his cloak suddenly. To stop was impossible. Hoodwinked, he was impelled forward, till striking against a tree, he endeavoured to arrest his course by catching at it. In the attempt he grasped an object—it was a man's leg! Before he could relinquish his hold, a heavy body bore him to the earth, and the dead murderer lay over him.

Private Rafferty succeeded in his mission, having procured a bottle of "the native" for the especial comfort of his commander. Crossing an angle of the Mall, he cast a hasty glance toward the spot where Kimlin had buffeted the storm, and vainly strained his vision to assure himself that the person of the outlaw was secure. No opaque form, however, presented itself in the partial-moon-light. "Holy Virgin! can this be possible?" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes anew; but the branch that "bore the weight of Antony" was bare and unadorned as any of its kindred boughs. Pat Rafferty, albeit as stout a sentinel "as ever called stand to a true man," was no hero where a dead one was concerned; he was just as contiguous to the departed patriot as his fancy would require, and accordingly contenting himself with a distant "reconnaissance," he proceeded to the guard-room to deliver at the same time his whiskey and tidings to the superior officer.

"Cead fealteagh!"\* exclaimed Sergeant O'Tool, as he eyed the bottle in his comrade's hand: "I niver needed a drap so badly, for I feel as if I had swallowed a snow-ball: give us a galliogue, Patshiene;"† and presenting a glass, it was filled and discussed with marvellous celerity. "That puts life in a man. Phew! there's a squall! Fresh hands at the bellows, gentlemen. What a swing Kimlin got!"

"The devil a swing," replied the bottle-holder, turning down a bumper in imitation of his worthy commander: "Kimlin has bate a retrace, as sure as my name is Pat Rafferty."

"Death anouns! asy with yee'r jokes," exclaimed the gallant sergeant.

"Jokes! By this book"—and here he pressed the bottle reverently to his lips—"there's not a rag of him on the tree, more than I'm there."

"*Mona mondiaoul!*" said the sergeant, "we're ruined, horse and foot! Corporal, *avourneen*,‡ run for the sake of Jasus—take a squint outside, and tell us what ye see."

Short was the corporal's absence; and when he returned, the fatal news was certified.

"Och, murder!" said Mr. O'Tool; "the Right Hanarable will hang us every mother sowl! Come along some of ye;" and seizing a lantern, which he lighted, off ran the sergeant, followed by five or six files of the jail guard.

It was a fortunate circumstance for the unlucky accoucheur that the descent of Mr. Kirlin had been so speedily discovered; and great was the astonishment of Sergeant O'Tool, when he found that in place of one body, he had a second to account for.

"Blood and thunder, boys! where did this one drap from? Why, this 'bates Bannagher!'" A groan interrupted him—"Mother of God! which of them was that?" and he crossed himself. "Hold the light down. Why, this one's alive!—Hallo! daacent man, who the devil are ye? Lord, how wild he looks! Phew! I comprehend it; he was stalin the corpse. Arrah, bad manners to ye—I've done worse before now than put the baynit through your carcass." Another long and hollow groan succeeded. "He's daarently dressed too, the thief of the world! Lift him;" and by main force the doctor was raised to a perpendicular. "What have ye to say, ye devil, for this attimpt—Sorra take ye, wantin to rob the Right Hanarable—Arrah, who the blazes are ye?"

\* A word of welcome.

† *Anglice*, "A glass-full, Pat."

‡ *Corporal*, darling.

But before the sergeant could be answered, a recruit lifted the lantern and scrutinized the features of the supposed culprit.

"Holy St. Patrick! can this be Doctor Donovan?" A feeble affirmative was groaned out.

"Oh, thin, it's larkin ye were, Doctor?" said the sergeant. "Arrah, for shame, to pull the crature about, after the tassing and tumbling he has underwint these three days. Go to your warm bed—it's no night for a steady little man like you to be out upon the batter. Help him home some of ye; for, by my conscience, whether it's fear or liquor, the devil a leg the man can lay before the other."

With considerable difficulty Doctor Donovan was carried by the soldiers to his own house, just as Mark Haggerty arrived a second time, to hurry him to attend my mother. One glance at the unlucky accoucheur, satisfied him of the red-plush breeches, that he must seek assistance elsewhere. Having heard a brief and confused narrative of the accident from the guard, Mark hastened back to my father, who was pacing the hall impatiently.

"Is he coming?" asked the latter.

"He's kilt," was the reply. "My curse attend ye, Kimlin!"

Dreadful was the consternation which Mark Haggerty's intelligence created: all and every, from the cook to the kitchen-maid, crossed themselves devoutly, and aves and paternosters were plentifully ejaculated. And while the butler was despatched to rouse the regimental surgeon, and my father was striving to conjecture by what ingenious device a dead man had contrived to finish a living one, the old nurse-tender shouted from the stair-head that my mother had produced an heir, "and, och, but he's a born beauty!"

Gentle reader, such were the circumstances attendant on my *entrée* into life; for the nurse's beauty was myself, your humble servant.

## CHAPTER II.

## MEMOIR OF MY FATHER.

Says the priest to my parents, ye ugly ould pair,  
Arrah, where could you get such a beautiful heir !

*Irish Ballad.*

How strictly the latter part of this admired distich might be applicable to myself, modesty will prevent me insinuating ; but certainly the former was not so to my parents, for both were young and handsome.

Cæsar Blake (for thus my father was designated) was the descendant of an ancient family, and the youngest of four brothers. The eldest succeeded to ancestral dignities and estates, and had been duly indoctrinated in fox-hunting and field-sports, electioneering, drinking, and duelling ; in short, in all those accomplishments which, for time immemorial, have been considered by the best authorities, the sole end for which Irish gentlemen were originally created. The second was a field-officer in the Austrian service. The third held a command in the Spanish marine. The fourth, my father, entered the British army when a boy, where he attained the rank of major.

Cæsar Blake was a general favourite with his regiment, which, though a flashy corps, was in no way remarkable for strictness in its discipline. The men were chiefly Irish, and consequently there were among them not a few of that description, known among soldiers by the title of "the king's bad bargains." The officers were young, wild, and gentlemanly. The colonel, an easy-tempered, good hearted, hard-drinking veteran, averse to all manner of severity, and of course obnoxious to being imposed upon by the men. Hence the regiment was frequently in scrapes—the officers perpetrating all sorts of mischief, and the men fighting with any who would so far oblige them. Complaints being eternally forwarded to the general of the district, at last the case came under serious consideration at the Horse Guards ; and to abate the evil, it was deemed advisable to remove the old commander, and replace him with a tartar.

But, from his previous services, there was no small difficulty in depriving Colonel Selby of his regiment. Fortu-

nately a staff appointment became vacant, and Colonel Macleod was gazetted to the command of the 18th "vice Selby promoted."

The veteran parted from his companions in arms with unfeigned regret. To the senior officers he was endeared by many a recollection of "Auld lang syne;" and on the younger he looked with the feelings of a too indulgent father, who forgives juvenile aberrations he should correct, from a mistaken but excusable affection. "My dear boys," he said, as on the morning of his departure he addressed himself to a group of wild ones, among whom my father was a leader—"be more upon your guard. Remember it is not the 'old man' with whom you will have to deal in future. Others may not make allowances for the exuberance of youthful spirits. Be cautious, my darling boys, and when I'm far away, recollect my parting admonition." They did so before long, as the sequel will demonstrate.

Colonel Selby intended quitting the barrack by the back-gate, for his heart was too full to permit his looking at the regiment for the last time with tolerable composure. The men were formed on parade, when their beloved commander was observed issuing from his quarters, leaning on my father's arm. Then a singular scene of military excitement ensued. The soldiers piled their arms, and rushed forward in one wild tumultuary mass. A chair was procured, and the colonel elevated on the shoulders of the tallest of the grenadiers. The band formed in front, and followed by the whole corps, officers and drum-boys, lightbobs and pioneers, women and children, and all the tag-rag and bobtail appertaining to a regiment, they proceeded in glorious confusion round the streets, and passed the inn with deafening cheers, just as the old man's successor stepped from a hackney-chaise.

Whether it was that no enthusiastic tokens of regret had marked the new commander's parting with the regiment he had quitted, certain it is, that this public demonstration of attachment to his predecessor did not operate favourably on his temper, when afterward receiving the complimentary visits of his new companions. He was a hard, weather-beaten, thin, tall, bilious Scotsman, who had passed every gradation of service from a drum-boy to the command. He was a teasing martinet, and an unforgiving disciplinarian. A constitutional harshness in temper and appearance was so remarkable, that an Irish corporal, in describing him to a comrade, declared that "he was cut out of a crab-tree, while the car-

penter, to get all the knots in the stick, had kept as near the root as possible."

It so happened that an elderly gentlewoman of some property, who had never been seduced into matrimony, resided in the town. She was a personage of goodly size, great hospitality, and inveterate devotion to the card-table. Shortly before Colonel Selby's departure, a feud had broken out between this lady and some juniors of the regiment. She loved *loo*—they patronized country-dancing—and at her last *fête*, taking umbrage at the obstinacy with which she rejected the introduction of a fiddle, they unceremoniously left the room, declaring one and all, that they would stand *loo* no longer.

This was bad enough in all conscience; but here the delinquency did not end. Unfortunately, in their "exit in a huff," they passed the supper-room. The door was open, the servants otherwise engaged, and the table already covered. This was a tempting sight certainly, and it was hard, at that late hour, to retire fasting. A consultation ensued. To return up-stairs was determined to be "*infra dignitatem*," to depart supperless a thing not to be tolerated. The course of action was soon decided—one seized a ham, another chose a turkey, my father adopted a chicken-pie, and a fourth selected a cooper of port. None departed empty-handed; and so rapidly was the larceny effected, that the delinquents were quietly refreshing themselves with the abstracted property, and taking their ease in the next inn, before the astonished mistress of the house was advertised, that the better moiety of her entertainment had departed with her rebellious guests.

Deep was the indignation of the hostess. She, one of the Macnamaras of Clare, to be treated with incivility, and that too in her own house, was

"To beard the lion in his den,  
The Douglass in his hall!"

That night she never closed an eye, and early next morning indited a letter to her kinsman Captain Anthony O'Dogherity, quondam of the Buffs, to require that he should exact due satisfaction for the injury, and take immediate vengeance on the persons of the offenders. But on reflection, she recollects that honest Anthony's pistol-hand had been already damaged in action; and even were he in full force, he was but one man, and what was that among so many. Legal redress came next under consideration, and her solicitor, Billy Davock was consulted in form.

Billy was a short, punchy little man, wore a light-coloured scratch-wig, took brown snuff, and was reputed the best opinion in cases of assault and battery, "this side of Dublin." He heard the story attentively, took a long and deliberate pinch of high-toast, shook his head, and requested to have the advantage of a night's reflection,—for which he subsequently introduced an item in his bill, under the denomination of "loss of sleep, 13s. 4d."

Next morning, Billy Davock visited his fair client right early. He had turned the case over attentively; and flagrant as it was he nevertheless admitted that doubts and dubitations had arisen. Great caution would be necessary in framing the indictment. If Major Cæsar Blake, whom might the Lord mend! was charged in the counts with stealing the ham, he would escape condign punishment, if he, the major, could satisfy the jury that he had merely purloined the turkey. Besides, the delinquents might prove an alibi. By the evidence of the company, she, Miss Macnamara, it is true, might establish the fact of the said Cæsar, with others named in the indictment, having been on her premises the night of the larceny. But then the barrack-guard would swear any thing they were directed to swear by their officers, as a matter of course. Consequently they, the defendants, would prove, by the affidavits of a sergeant, corporal, and twelve privates, that they had never left the mess-room. If the prosecution failed, the traversers would have a good action for defamation and loss of character, and heavy damages would be recovered. Under these perplexing circumstances, he, Billy Davock, would advise a case to be submitted to counsel; and he would accordingly, if his client so instructed him, take the opinion of certain persons whom he enumerated as being learned in the law.

But, on mature consideration, Miss Macnamara, alarmed at the complexity of the case, abandoned all hope of legal redress. She had, she discovered, but one safe remedy against the parties, and that was their eternal exclusion from her card and supper tables.

It is to be lamented that this merciful determination of the injured gentlewoman did not operate upon the offender as it should. Whether it was that, hardened by impunity, or piqued because at the next entertainment their names were not found among those bidden to the feast, does not appear; but certain it is, that having discussed an additional quantity of old port, they, "*suadente diabolo*," sallied out at mid-

night, to concert and carry on measures of retaliation upon the already sinned against Miss Macnamara.

The house of this persecuted lady was situate in the centre of the town; yet being, what is in Connaught termed "a lone woman," to preserve property and person, it behoved her to have her domicile well secured. Accordingly, the lower windows were defended by iron stanchions that effectually prevented ingress to, or egress from the mansion. Of this the conspirators took advantage: they screwed gimblets silently into the doors and door-posts, front and rear, lashed them together by a stout cord, and thus Miss Macnamara and her guests were illegally deprived of liberty.

This effected, a slate's ladder was procured from an adjacent yard, a horse-sheet saturated with water, and one of the party, who had been formerly in the navy, mounting the roof, clambered to the chimney-top, and effectually choaked the funnel by stuffing it with the wet cloth.

All within the mansion was joy and revelry; supper had ended, and it was as all admitted, excellent and extensive enough to make amply up for the spoliation of its predecessor. The gentlemen were indulging in brandy punch, and the ladies refreshing themselves with portwine negus. Miss Macnamara, having "cleaned out" the company at *loo*, was of course in glorious spirits; and Colonel Macleod, who occupied the post of honour beside the hostess, apparently infected by the general hilarity, twisted his saturnine features into what he intended for a smile. A probationer from Maynooth had just favoured the revellers with that celebrated drinking song, intituled, "Jolly mortals, fill your glasses," and a *débutante* from Mrs. Mac Greal's finishing school at Cloonakilty, was arranging her mouth to execute "Will you come to the bower?"—ladies laughed, gentlemen pinched them beneath the table-cloth, fun was the order of the night, care might go hang himself,

"And all went merry as a marriage bell!"

Just then a long continuous volume of dense smoke came rolling down the chimney; "Murder!" cried the chief attendant. "Bad luck to them thieves, the sweeps! they promised to be here a week ago." Puff, puff, puff, went the chimney. "Raise the windows!" exclaimed the hostess, who happened to be constitutionally *thick-winded*. Puff, puff, puff—"Holy Virgin! I'm smothered!" ejaculated Captain O'Dowd, who had recently returned to his native

town, with a confirmed asthma and increased pension. Puff, puff, puff—"Open the hall door!" roared the priest.

"It's fastened without."

Puff, puff—"Try the back one, for the love of heaven!"  
"It won't open."

The consternation was awful; the company hurried from the supper room; and the Colonel, who from a pulmonary infirmity, was necessitated to make a rapid retreat, having inserted his spurs in the table-cloth, removed it, glasses and all, without the assistance of the servants. Death appeared inevitable, and the only reasonable doubt was, whether the coroner would attribute it to fright or suffocation. That nicer etiquette, which in ordinary cases prohibits interviews in bedchambers to all ladies and gentlemen who have not been joined in holy wedlock, was now disregarded, and sufferers of both sexes might be discovered in all departments of the establishment, in search of a more endurable atmosphere. At that moment of general distress, a voice from the street exclaimed, "The top of the morning to you, mother Macnamara! Will you give us 'Jolly mortals' again, if you please."

"It's them thieves of the world from the barrack!" exclaimed the butler. "Open the door and let us out, or, by the eternal frost, I'll swear my life agin yees in the mornin'!" But equally vain would have been threats or solicitations on the blockading party, had not several lanterns been seen approaching. Off the delinquents scampered, leaving their deliverance from captivity to be achieved by the domestics of the *détenu*s, who fortunately were at hand.

If Miss Sally Macnamara was mortally offended at this daring attempt upon the lives and liberties of her loo party, Colonel Macleod was not less incensed at having been confined by his own corps, and smoked by them with as scanty ceremony as they would have extended to a badger. The delinquents were threatened with courts-martial by the commander, and apprized that law proceedings were instituted for false imprisonment by Billy Davock, who, unfortunately for them, had been among the number of the sufferers.

The parting admonition of the old Colonel was now painfully recollected; and, too late, the wild youths discovered that his successor was one of different mould. To some, the consequences of the mad exploit would have been ruinous; and, undervaluing the result, or calculating with false

security on superior rank to shield him, my father generously took the blame upon himself, and became responsible alone for the late foray against the spinster. True, that by this course he exposed himself to the wrath of Antony O'Dogherty, with every asthmatic loo-player in the town; but this was of minor import to one who more than once had "burned powder." After much diplomacy and letter-writing it was intimated as a *sine qua non*, that a public apology was required, and this my father peremptorily refused. A formal complaint was in consequence transmitted to the general of the district; and the result was, that to Major Cæsar Blake it was officially notified that he had the option to retire from the regiment, or stand a court-martial. Irritated at his colonel's conduct in the transaction, my father chose the former alternative, and at the early age of twenty-four he left the service in disgust—a major upon half-pay.

Turned adrift upon the world, the major's first impulse would have determined him to join his second "brother," who held a military command in Germany, but an incident had already decided the future career of my unlucky and light-hearted parent.

It happened that, during the preceding spring, when the 18th were quartered in Manchester, my father had obtained a short leave of absence to run up to London, and in the stage-coach accidentally encountered a gentleman and his daughter, to whom during the journey he contrived in some way to be serviceable. The lady was returning from a watering-place, whither she had accompanied her father. She was very young, very pretty, and very romantic; and it would have been extraordinary indeed, if the marked attentions of the handsome traveller had escaped her observation. The major at first sight was exceedingly enamoured. He was, however, no Romeo, but a firm believer in that leading axiom of a soldier's creed, that he is bound, as a point of duty, "to love all that is lovely, and all that he can"—and at that time he was unfortunately a pluralist in flirtations, having three affairs to occupy his leisure, and each of them important ones too. The old gentleman was shy and repulsive, as his daughter was winning and unsuspicuous; and for the greater portion of the journey, the former eschewed all approximation toward companionship. Still the constant and gentlemanly attention of his fellow-traveller could not be entirely disregarded; and when his carriage met the stage he interchanged cards with the polite passenger, and gave

him an invitation to visit him when returning from the metropolis. While with jealous care the old traveller watched the transfer of his luggage, the young ones were taking a hasty farewell, and, I suspect, a tender one. Ellen Harrison departed deep in love, and for the two next stages, my father was silent and melancholy as a Trappist.

How long the fit would have continued is uncertain; but, fortunately for his peace of mind, a young dress-maker joined the coach in Coventry. He was thinking on his absent love—the soft seductive eye—the glance, downcast and furtive—the rosy lip—the flushing cheek, were all affectionately recalled; and that artless look at parting, so silent and so eloquent—lingering and loving, as it stole from beneath her silken lashes, while the carriages were being separated. He sighed heavily: and how could he help it? The sigh was responded by a gentle suspiration. He glanced hastily at his solitary companion, and a lightning look from the blackest eyes in Coventry met his! She too, poor soul, was a sentimentalist. She had parted from her lover in a pet; and, God knows, that was enough to make any tender-hearted gentlewoman unhappy. Was it wonderful then, that two afflicted beings, *tête-à-tête* in a stage-coach, should approximate in their distresses? Would it be pardonable in an Irish major of foot to encourage solitary melancholy, with the prettiest corset-maker in Coventry to console and be consoled? Could my father emulate Saint Senanus of frigid memory, and he enfiladed by the fire of an eye, "soft, floating, dark," which would have puzzled that holy man to resist? No—he did endeavour to solace his suffering companion—gradually Miss Minchin recovered her serenity; and when the Manchester Rocket stopped at the White Horse Cellar, in Picadilly and the travellers departed in a hackney coach, so tenderly did the gallant major enfold his fair friend in his military roquelaure, that the *cad* declared they were indubitably a newly-married couple, while the coachman averred upon his conscience, that the lady must be a runaway wife, "because the Irish gentleman was so very attentive; and every one knew that they preferred anybody's to their own."

Whether it was that Miss Minchin's black eye operated as a counter-charm to Miss Harrison's blue one I cannot say, but my father nearly managed to forget her; and yet circumstances did occasionally recall her to his memory. One morning, a nameless billet brought him a beautiful ring-

let of light brown hair. Whose was it? It was puzzling, but he did not think the event worth the trouble of investigation. The truth was, the major was a lady-killer, *billets doux* were no novelties to him, and ringlets reached him by every post, as various in their colours as the tintsof' the rainbow.

His removal from his regiment also created a general sensation. He had an extensive military connection, and had been a favourite in the different towns where he had been quartered with his corps. Wildness, if the offender be well-looking, is a venial crime in woman's eyes; therefore the dashing major was considered a proper subject for female sympathy. Colonel Macleod was universally disliked, consequently Cæsar Blake was declared by his male acquaintances an injured man—and they resolved unanimously that it was a hard case to lose one's commission for stuffing an old maid's chimney with a wet horse-cloth. No wonder, then, that my father, commiserated by both sexes, bore his misfortunes bravely; and when he returned to his brother's at Castle Blake, and Connaught, cousins to the third and fourth generation rose *en masse* to welcome him in genuine obsolete Irish hospitality, every regret was banished, and the ex-major was as happy as fox-hunting and cock-shooting, dancing and drinking, could make him.

Yet at times, and it was natural enough, old recollections would cause a sigh. At his brother's jovial board, the memory of the mess-table would obtrude itself; and even in the merriest dance, other balls and other beauties would pass in "shadowy review." Sometimes he contrasted the rival belles who now besieged him with his absent loves, and the result was not favourable. Harriette Kirwan, "the Cynthia of the minute," was a glorious, joyous, unsophisticated madcap. All with her was natural and unstudied, whether she sailed through the mazes of a country-dance, or rode with masculine intrepidity to the fastest fox-hounds in the county, her light green habit and veil, like a streamer behind, "floating loose as mountain breezes." But Harriette's spirits were at times too exuberant—and when once she flogged a shepherd for letting a field-gate close against the counter of her thorough-bred mare, my father shuddered at this amazonian feat, and felt afraid lest in the married estate this passion for the horsewhip might continue, and in connubial discussion, if all other arguments failed, the devil might tempt her, as a last resource, to try what virtue lay in flagellation.

Such was Cæsar Blake's state of feeling, when a letter addressed to him, bearing an English post-mark, was left upon the breakfast-table. The hand-writing of the direction, and the motto and device upon the seal, told that his correspondent was a female. Harriette Kirwan's eyes flashed while she observed the colour rise upon my father's cheek, as he perused the fair one's billet; and when he rose suddenly and left the room, and afterward, under some light pretext, declined riding with her to make a morning call in the neighbourhood, her jealousy was confirmed; for Harriette loved him.

The letter that interested the major so much, ran thus:—

"I hardly know in what terms to address you. Still I feel the effort must be made, and that too without farther preface. During many, many months, I have indulged the cherished expectation of seeing you again. You promised this at parting, and I have clung to the hope, until to hope longer would be foolish.

"I address you with diffidence; for, in doing so, perhaps I shall incur your contempt. But even that I must risk; and more I can scarcely suffer than I have already done from concealed anguish and suspense.

"If I overstep the barrier prescribed by custom to my sex, do not judge of me unfavourably. She who does so, has nothing but the purity of her motives to console her. If she errs, she errs from principle; and while she knows the act may be indelicate, she proudly feels that her honour is stainless as your own.

"When I met you, Blake, my heart had never felt any attachment, nor owned warmer impressions than those which natural affections produce. Since then, one object has haunted my imagination—I have thought of you, prayed for you, dreamed of you. If this open and undisguised expression of my feelings offend, I shall be sufficiently punished by your indifference. I have no other fear; I confide my secret to a soldier—my confidence is not misplaced, and I implicitly rely on your silence with regard to this communication.

"I may have done wrong in encouraging fancies, which in maturer age I should have known were improper. I may be deemed by you a silly and romantic girl; but this confession would not have been made—this weakness exposed—had not circumstances rendered a disclosure, otherwise indelicate, now, on my part, an imperious duty.

"Blake—Oh! that I dare add the epithet my heart suggests—I am addressed by one in every respect my equal: and he is encouraged by my only parent. I cannot love him; my hand he may obtain, but he will have no heart to accompany it. Would I not be wrong, would I not be criminal, did I plight my troth to him at the altar of my God, when my thoughts by day, my dreams by night, wander to another?

"With bitter anguish I observed that, for some trifling misunderstanding with your commanding officer, you had in pique retired from the regiment. I know nothing of the causes; it is enough for me that you retired with unblemished honour. How far your circumstances may be affected by this professional misfortune I cannot conjecture; but—why does my cheek glow—why does my hand tremble—why blush at the avowal?—if my small fortune could be an object, it is freely, entirely yours. Would that I could win your heart; mine, alas! is all your own.

"Blake—dear, dear Blake—pardon this madness. Alas! I know not what to do: I have no sister to console, no mother to direct me. My father loves me; but he is stern and cold—I dare not confide in him—his very look would kill me. Will you come to me? Ah! no; seas probably divide us: but write to me, dear Blake. If your heart is another's, in mercy tell me so: that cruelty will be kindness: then must I tear your image from my heart, though the effort break it.

"Farewell, *dear, dear Blake*. I feel that I have taken a fearful step, and suspense will now be insupportable. If I knew that to love you would be hopeless, vain, criminal, I might forget you. Be candid with me, and if your affections are not for me, still pity the weakness of a woman, and think favourably of one, who, were it permitted, would be your's, and your's for ever. *Dearest, adieu.*

"E. H."

"Stainsbury Park."

The effect of this letter upon my father was decisive. The young, and beautiful, and artless Ellen loved him! This was not the passion that lives but in the sunshine, and, when the horizon is overcast, droops and dies. Ah, no: when gay, courted, and *distingué*, she loved him, but she loved in secret; but when fortune frowned—when youthful indiscretion exposed him to consequences that might have been fatal to his future prospects—"when every tongue his follies named," then, with a devotion that seemed romantic—the timid girl

disclosed her latent passion, and took the outcast to her heart. Was not this love—deep, enduring, ingenuous love?—and Cæsar Blake's determination was instantly formed to start without delay for Stainsbury.

Thus resolving, he had insensibly wandered through the shrubbery, and following a by-path, found himself in a coppice which overhung a small lake, some distance from the hall. Flinging himself upon a fallen tree, he perused again the letter of his artless and devoted mistress. “I shall not waste an hour,” he said aloud, conscious that in this remote place none could overhear his soliloquy.” “Yes, Ellen, quick as winds and distance will admit, I will prove how securely you have placed your love, and how fond and ardent its return shall be.” He pressed the letter to his lips—replaced it carefully in his bosom—rose and commenced preparations for an immediate departure, when a deep sigh startled him. Hastily he looked round, and Harriette Kirwan stood beside him.

Wild, reckless, and impetuous, she watched from her window the direction he had taken when he left the house. Maddened by jealousy—agitated by the tempest of her passions, without any definite object to direct her, she determined to risk an interview. She quickly followed him, while, unconscious that he was observed, my father took the very path which, above all others, he should have shunned.

Her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes alarmed him; her bonnet was carelessly thrown back, and her magnificent dark hair escaping overspread her neck and shoulders.

“Gracious God!” exclaimed my father, “has anything alarmed you, Harriette?” She was silent for some time, till, bursting into a passionate flood of tears, she sobbed hysterically. Her astonished companion seated her on the fallen oak, and placed himself beside her. “Harriette, for Heaven's sake, compose yourself; what has occurred?” Still no reply.—“Dear Harriette, can I assist, can I relieve you?” No answer yet. “Speak to me—tell me what distresses you—you know, Harriette, I have no cousin I love so well as you.”

“And do you love me?” she exclaimed with animation, as she turned her wild and delighted eyes upon his. “Oh, Cæsar, say so again!—say you *do* love me, and I shall be then too happy!”

“Dear Harriette,”—and my father made an awkward and embarrassing pause—“you know I ever loved you as a sister.”

"As a sister!" and she pouted sullenly; "a sister's is not the love I feel toward you: Cæsar, I cannot live. Unless you let me love you fondly, warmly, ardently, as a woman loves, I shall die!" and she flung her arms round him, and hid her burning face upon his breast.

My father was fearfully agitated. He young, impetuous, and unreflecting—the undisguised passion of one so dangerously beautiful as Harriette Kirwan, might have wrought their mutual ruin. She hung upon his bosom, her eyes swimming with tears; and when he strove to calm her agitated spirits, and reason with her coolly, his lips unluckily met hers, and a fervid kiss of those impassioned lips interrupted, alas! the philosophic homily he had prepared himself to deliver.

It was indeed for both a trying moment; beautiful arms were wound around him, and looks, dark and lustrous, turned passionately upon his;—eyes that required the direct intervention of a patron saint to disarm—that none but an anchorite could resist—that an Irish gentleman should more especially avoid, as

"He that knows  
His heart is weak, to Heaven should pray  
To guard him against looks like those."

Just then a noise was heard—a red setter burst through the copse—a woodcock flushed—a gun exploded—and breaking the hazle boughs above their heads, the dead bird fell at my father's foot. Instantly hurrying his dangerous cousin along the path, before the sportsman could reload, the major and his companion were clear of the shrubbery, and directing their steps to the house by the open carriage drive.

It may be conjectured that the soldier carefully avoided another *tête-à-tête*. Harriette, mistaking the cause of my father's agitation during their morning interview, ascribed it to very different feelings, and indulging in hopes groundless and delusory, prepared to follow up her success. But the major, like an able commander, would leave nothing to chance, and had determined on retreating without "beat of drum." Secretly, therefore, orders of readiness were issued to Denis O'Brien, whom he had "purchased out" when he left the 18th. The baggage was packed without parade; and before daylight next morning, while the blooming Harriette dreamed of her dashing kinsman, the false commander was levanting upon the coach-box of the Galway mail, with Denis

and a brown portmanteau on the roof, the valet lilting an Irish song, and the master blowing "a comfortable cloud," with as much indifference as if they had bidden a ceremonious farewell to all in Castle Blake, "nor left a breaking heart behind."

It would be irrelevant to notice the fair one's rage when the departure of Cæsar Blake was first announced. In her chamber, she gave vent to feelings that were wild and tempestuous enough. Meanwhile the beloved one was posting to her favoured rival. The winds blew favourably and distance lessened—until on the fifth evening, by the light of a splendid moon, the major drove into the remote village, adjacent to which the mansion and domain of Mr. Harrison lay.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CROSS KEYS AND THE INTERVIEW.

It is the hour when from the boughs  
The nightingale's high note is heard;  
It is the hour when lovers' vows  
Seem sweet in every whisper'd word;—  
And gentle winds, and waters near,  
Make music to the lonely ear.  
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,  
And in the sky the stars are met,  
And on the wave is deeper blue,  
And on the leaf a browner hue,  
And in the heaven that clear obscure,  
So softly dark, and darkly pure,  
Which follows the decline of day,  
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

But it is not to list to the waterfall,  
That Parasina leaves her hall;  
And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light,  
That the lady walks in the shadow of night;  
And if she sits in Este's bower,  
'Tis not for the sake of its full-blown flower;  
She listens, but not for the nightingale,  
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.  
There glides a step through the foliage thick,  
And her cheek grows pale, and her heart beats quick;  
There whispers a voice through the rustling leaves,  
And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves:

A moment more, and they shall meet—  
'Tis past—her lover's at her feet!

PARASINA.

THE Cross Keys at Stainsbury was one of those comfortable country inns, which the experienced traveller prefers to the noisier houses of public accommodation that are to be found in larger places. It was "a low snug dwelling, and in good repair," flanked on one side by an extensive row of stabling, and on the other by a crowded stackyard. In front appeared a well cropped garden, with its flower-knots, and apiary, and close-cut hedges. There was a general neatness out of doors which told "mine host" was no sloven: within, every thing was orderly and scrupulously clean; and when the traveller looked at the well-appointed parlour, he could not but contrast it with the dirty, dreary, racketty caravanserais, which even the best of the Hibernian hostels at that time were.

The arrival of the gallant major occasioned some bustle among the household of the Cross Keys. The soldier having now reached the scene of action, settled himself before the cheerful wood fire to arrange his plans for opening the campaign, by communicating his arrival to his "lady love." This, as it was the first, would probably be the most difficult movement—a failure would be fatal, and, therefore, due caution must be exercised. In Denis O'Brien he had an efficient and devoted ally, and, barring blunders, never did a more accomplished valet assist in the abstraction of an heiress. Denis had a bold heart, a stout arm, a ready wit, and brass enough to qualify for a London footman; but he had his failings, and these were an inveterate brogue, an unquenchable thirst, and an aversion to cool argument, which sometimes induced him to strike first, and reason afterward.

While my father was ruminating upon his plans, the table had been covered with a snowy cloth, and other necessary appendages for his immediate refreshment. Whether hunger or love had rendered his perceptions less acute than ordinary, I cannot say, but as he sate in moody silence, beating the "devil's tattoo" upon his boot, and gazing on the fire, the landlord's handsome daughter had visited and left the apartment thrice, without being noticed by the guest. This insensibility of the stranger piqued the *demoiselle*, who determined to interrupt his meditations.—"Did you order wine, sir?" she said, poking her pretty face over my father's shoulder. But the traveller continued tapping the metal stove with the point of his cane. "Sir—sir, are you asleep or at your pray-

ers?" and she lightly touched his arm. My father raised his eyes carelessly, and they encountered a pair of as brilliant hazel ones, as ever undid a devotee.

"Now, Heaven pardon you," said the traveller, "I had just made resolutions against temptation, and you come here to overset them."

"Sir—sir, for shame; how could you kiss one so, and the window open?"

"Well, child, and who's to blame for that? Draw the curtains, and we'll talk about the wine. I'm so modest! it's a failing, I know—but who is faultless?"

"Modest! are you an Irishman?"

"Yes, pretty one, sit down upon my knee, and I'll give you all the particulars of my birth, parentage, and education."

"Can it be possible?" exclaimed the young attendant. "Gallant sir, have I ever seen that modest face before? Nay, I am not near-sighted, and am just as safe with the table between us. Have I had the honour of travelling in company with a crusty old man, a beautiful girl, and a most impertinent major, who, while the honest gentleman was engaged in attending to his trunks, did not neglect that opportunity, to bestow his parting benediction on the lips of the blushing daughter?"

"Now, who the deuce are you?" cried the soldier. "Speak or I'll jump over the table and kiss you to death upon the spot!"

"What a desperado the man must be!" said the maid of the inn. "Shall I tell a tale that happened not a hundred years ago. Once upon a time, a young lady went to a watering place with her papa, and a cross papa he was. The day before she left home, her maid took a fancy to get married, and what was to be done? She could not get a servant, and persuaded her nurse's daughter to be her attendant for the time. On the return of the lady by the stage, (for papa would not travel as other people do, in their own carriages,) unfortunately a tall, impudent, well-looking Irish major was a fellow-passenger. Argus-eyed as the old man was, the soldier out-maneuvred him—persuaded the poor girl that she was in love, and in that belief she has since continued. Now, the attendant was not blind; she saw from behind the carriage that, while papa was rummaging the boot, the major was kissing his daughter, while he placed an emerald ring upon her finger, which ring the silly girl has worn next her heart since they parted."

"Stop! you have my secret—Am I safe—may I place confidence in you, my pretty one?"

"Listen," she replied, "and you will best judge. My father and mother were fellow-servants at the hall, which they left upon their marriage. This inn and farm belong to Mr. Harrison, and when they became vacant he placed my parents here. Soon afterward, Miss Ellen's mother died in giving her birth, and the charge and nursing of the pretty orphan were entrusted to mine. Never did sister love another better than I do her. I know how her affections are disposed of. If she weds to please her father, her misery for life is certain. If she weds to please herself, she will be deserted and disinherited; for there lives not a more unbending and unrelenting parent than hers. She has, it is true, a fortune in her own right, which none can control; but to all else (and her father's power over his estates is absolute) let her bid adieu. You, sir, have no trifling difficulties to surmount. You must be prompt, and at the same time cautious. Beyond a day or two, here you cannot remain unknown and undiscovered. If a suspicion arises, you and Ellen are separated for ever. My father is devoted to his master. Take care of him. But what errand brought you here? What reason can you assign for stopping at an obscure inn, and at a remote village? You cannot pass for a farmer, or a bagman, or a horse-dealer, or any thing connected with an honest calling. That military swagger and impudent look, and the mad Irishman who accompanies you, would at once betray your cut-throat trade. The fellow was scarcely in the house before he squabbled with the exciseman, and tumbled the dairy-maid about as if he had known her for a twelve-month. Pray, what business brought you here?"

"Upon my conscience, my dear girl, that's a poser!" returned my father.

"I have it—here read this," and Phoebe handed the major a country paper, while a loud voice called to her from without, to say that dinner was ready; and when she left the room, my father perused the advertisement.

It was a sale of horses, the property of a departed fox-hunter, who lived a few miles from Stainsbury; and they were, as the newspaper announced, to come in a few days "unreservedly to the hammer." This was indeed a lucky event; and the major decided, that to buy horses should be his errand, and that he would accommodate himself during his sojourn at the Cross Keys, with the name of an old friend in

the Enniskillen dragoons, at present quartered at Ipswich. Mr. O'Brien was quickly summoned; and before Phœbe re-entered with dinner, Denis was fully instructed in the object of their visit to the inn, and cautioned, moreover, to abstain from disorganizing dairy-maids and quarrelling with excisemen.

When dinner was removed, as Phœbe laid the wine upon the table, she addressed the major in an under voice,—

“ Fortune favours you to-night. A monthly club, of which my father is a member, meets at the Red Lion on the other side of the bridge. This will remove a very troublesome neighbour for the evening, and enable me to apprise Miss Ellen of your arrival, which, without rousing his suspicions, I could scarcely have ventured to do at this late hour. But hark! I hear the keeper's voice in the kitchen, and from him I may probably ascertain how the folks at the hall are occupied.” So saying, she left the room.

Nor was she long absent; and on her return there was an excitement in look and manner, that told her to be the bearer of important news.

“ Every thing favours you, gallant sir. There is a party of gentlemen at the hall. Mr. Harrison will be of course engaged with his company, and Miss Ellen most probably in the drawing-room or her own chamber. If this be the case, you shall in person announce your arrival. Attend to me. The window is low; open the lattice, step gently out, turn round the corner of the stables, and you will find yourself in a narrow lane; it leads to a wicket in the park-wall, for which I have a key. Wait for me there, and keep close under the hedge, lest your figure be discovered by the moonlight. I will join you speedily; and I shall send your servant in to close the casement, after you have passed through it.”

My father was a daring, devil-may-care fellow, and quickly as events hurried on, he was all ready for action. Denis was duly apprised of the intended expedition, admonished to be on the alert, and to be sure to keep his mouth close, and ears and eyes open. My father put on his hat, filled a bumper, and pointing to the decanter, intimated that Mr. O'Brien might follow the example. “Here's luck,” said the master, as the wine disappeared; “Amen,” responded the attendant; and next moment the major stepped gingerly out, and Denis closed the lattice.

Never was there a sweeter night to spirit a lady off, or

achieve other feats, to which the garish light of day is supposed to be unfavourable. Following the directions of his pretty guide, the major easily found out the path and reached the wicket. Denis remained upon the *qui vive*, visited the parlour with fuel, and appeared to be in close attendance on his master, while Phœbe departed for the hall with a parcel, which fortunately had arrived by the evening stage, and which she stoutly declared to be an article of paramount importance, requiring an immediate delivery. All was ably executed; and in a quarter of an hour Cæsar Blake found himself safe within the park-walls which enclosed his gentle mistress. Phœbe conducted him by a private walk to the rear of the mansion, and ensconced him in a clump of evergreen while she proceeded to execute her embassy.

It was quite evident the whole establishment of the hall had ample occupation. The noise of joyous revelry reached the major in his ambuscade. Lights flashed across the passages, and figures appeared and vanished. The opposite wing of the building was the scene of the evening festivity. Thence the noises came, and there the windows were illuminated; while those before which the concealed soldier was posted were lighted only by the moon, and unfrequented by any of the revellers.

While my father listened and looked from his ambuscade, a solitary figure appeared at the window immediately before him, and by the stream of moonlight, it was evidently a female form. To judge from her attitude she was no sharer in the general festivity; for she rested her head against the casement, and seemed absorbed in sombre meditations. Was it Ellen? The figure was fuller and taller than his pretty mistress; but this alteration a year might have effected. Should he venture to attract the attention of the solitary fair one?—It was hazardous; it might be one of the domestics; a discovery would undo him, and he determined to leave all to fate and Phœbe. Nor was he wrong: in a few minutes a second form was visible, and the dress and figure announced it to be his guide.

Brief as the dialogue was that ensued, the major watched for its termination with impatience. The action of the parties apprised him, that his proximity was being communicated by the maid of the inn. He observed the taller figure fling her arms round her companion's neck; he saw the casement open; he heard his own name softly whispered. Bounding

from his concealment, he approached—passed through the window, and pressed to his bosom his beloved and beautiful mistress.

Joy and terror prevented Ellen Harrison from speaking; and while my father supported her to a sofa, Phœbe, like a prudent sentinel, took care to secure the door, and bolt out all intruders. Poor Ellen was completely overpowered by conflicting passions, as the soldier covered her lips with kisses, and plighted his ardent love.—“Oh! can you, will you pardon me, dear, dear Blake! Was it not wrong in me to write so boldly?”

The major pressed her still closer to his heart.—“Oh, no; my best beloved! that candour has bound me to you forever! But time flies, and every moment is precious! Wilt thou fly with me, Ellen?—me! a discarded soldier?—Wilt thou share my humble lot, while rank and wealth are at your refusal?”

“Yes; my own love! all will I give up for thee—thou wouldst not deceive me! I, who trust all—yours I am, and yours for ever!”

How long this lover-like rhapsodizing might have been continued, those who have experienced the tender passion can best determine. To Phœbe it appeared necessary to interrupt it, and accordingly she approached the sofa—

“Come, gallant major—Is this a time for heroics? There is one not far distant who, did he but suspect the present *tête-à-tête*, I fear would be rude enough to make one of the party. Surely, between this and Gretna there is many a long mile, and you will have ample time to bill and coo upon the journey. Come, Miss Ellen, the major must march. Give her one parting kiss. Lord! did I tell you to give her twenty?”

The arguments of the *soubrette* were too just to admit of disputation. In a few minutes the necessary arrangements for an elopement on the next night were completed, and my mother agreed to leave her home for ever, and share the fortunes of one almost a stranger.

Favoured by the occupation of the household, the major and his handsome guide retreated from the enemy's cantonments without observation, and reached the Cross Keys safely.—Phœbe stole in by the back-door unnoticed, while her companion halted in front of the caravanserai? to reconnoitre the premises, before he would attempt a re-entry by the casement.

There was no cause of suspicion, however, that either his absence, or that of "the maid of the inn," had been remarked. The major peeped through the lattice of the kitchen, and the appearance of the company was satisfactory. A glorious fire blazed within, where, on chairs and settles, divers guests were seen comfortably refreshing themselves. One, and the most prominent of the group, stood before the fire, and in him the major had no difficulty in recognizing his own worthy attendant, Mr. Denis O'Brien. He appeared to be at the moment undergoing a very searching examination, relative to his own and his master's motives for visiting the good town of Stainsbury; and to judge by that portion of the colloquy which the latter overheard, the interlocutor, as the Scotch call it, had small reason to plume himself upon the result of his inquisition.

"And it is to buy horses your master is come here?" said a short red-nosed personage, directing a fiery grey eye upon the valet.

"It's yourself may say that, with your own purty mouth," replied Denis O'Brien.

"What does he want them for?" said the gentleman with the red nose.

"Just to keep his feet from the pavement," returned Denis.

"Is he a dealer, or a coach-master?" asked ferret-eye.

Denis whistled a few bars of a song,—"He's only a dragoon, jewel, and they take an oath at Highgate, niver to walk when they have a horse, and prefer riding into the bargain?" and he lilted up the butt-end of a ballad—

"Says the judge, you must bundle to Botany Bay;  
My lord, then, says Bob, I won't walk the whole way.  
Singing, Dig e dum di, dum dee!"

"You are an Irishman," continued the querist—"Pray what part of Ireland are you from?"

"'Pon my soul!" replied Mr. O'Brien, "you will oblige me particularly by telling me what part of it I'm not from?" and he sung—

"I courted in Cavan, play'd cards in Ardee,  
Kissed the maid in Dromore, and broke glass in Tralee;  
I married in Sligo, got drunk at Arboe,  
And what's that to any one, whether or no?"

"Is your master married?" said the stout stranger.

"If he's not, he's fairly promised;" was the reply.

"Pray, what family does he belong to? for I was some time in Ireland," rejoined he with the red nose.

"What family?" replied Denis O'Brien, "Arrah, is it joking ye are? He's a true discindint of the kings of Connaught, and blood-relation to every Burke, Blake, and Bodkin, from Loughrea to Limerick.

"I leave my pate to Darby Tate,  
My face to the O'Grady's:  
And I lave my legs to Daniel Begs,  
To shake among the ladies.  
Sing modereen roo, a roo, a roo."

And now, that I think of it, I'll go and see whether he wants more fire;" and Mr. O'Brien swaggered out, leaving the stout gentleman rather dissatisfied with his information, much of which, by the by, he suspected to be apocryphal.

Nothing could have been more successful than the opening of the campaign. Luck was certainly on my father's side; and "luck," Mr. O'Brien averred, "was every thing." Before he retired for the night, the major held a cabinet council with his friend Phœbe, and it was then and there determined that, to elude suspicion, he should leave the Cross Keys next day, proceed to the next town, there remain *perdu* till evening, provide a carriage, return at midnight, and with the assistance of his fair ally, enter the park and bear away his mistress.

All this was accordingly put in train. Denis received orders of readiness; and, by eleven o'clock next morning, the major and his man were on the road, after taking an affectionate farewell of the landlord and the curious gentleman with the red nose.

Allerton was but eight miles distant, and there my father established his head-quarters. The day, "big with the fate" of my parents wore heavily through. The major was uncomfortable, and so was the major's man—for Denis was on duty; and when on duty, Denis, from military habitude, dispensed with the comforts of the bottle, to which on other occasions it was his fancy to apply.

Time kept moving, evening came on apace, and the weather, threatening since morning, hourly grew worse. The wind rose, the rain fell sharply against the casement, as the cold shower was driven on by frequent gusts. The moon was hidden behind an impenetrable mass of clouds, and night fell with all that could render it dreary and unpropitious.

My father and his man Denis were not free from those superstitious fancies to which the natives of the "land of saints" are generally prone; and both, in private, drew from this elemental change, sinister auguries touching the success of their nocturnal expedition.

*Eight, nine, ten,* pealed from the town-clock. My father roused himself for action, and Denis fortified his person "against harm" by turning down a full bumper of cogniac. A bill was called, a post-chaise ordered round instanter; and while Mr. O'Brien saw his effects duly deposited in the carriage, the major carefully examined the loading of his pistols. At half-past ten the master and man ascended the vehicle, and, to the astonishment of the household of the Black Bull, drove from that comfortable house of accommodation, upon a night when a Christian would not reject the dog of his enemy.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ELOPEMENT.

Oh, lady, at thy window be,  
It is the wished, the trysted hour.

*Scotch Song.*

Let it be so, thy truth then be thy dower:  
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,  
The mysteries of Hecate and the night,  
By all the operations of the orbs,  
From whom we do exist, and cease to be;  
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
Propinquity, and property of blood,  
And as a stranger to my heart and me  
Hold thee, from this, for ever.

*SHAKSPEARE.*

IT was not until the travellers had cleared the streets of Allerton that they were fully aware of the dreary drive before them. The night was pitch dark; the carriage unprovided with lamps; while through the leafless hedgerows the wind howled mournfully. How different was this from the preceding evening—all then so calm and bright and exhilarating. It was

"But the daylight sick,  
Looking a little paler."

Notwithstanding the difficulty attendant upon driving over intricate cross-roads, they reached their destination in safety, and while the carriage was placed at a convenient distance from the park-gate, the steeple-clock of Stainsbury struck twelve.

At the Cross Keys the inmates had retired to rest. The sign-board creaked in the breeze; the mastiff was sleeping before the kitchen-fire; the hostler was snoring in his crib; and the dairy-maid dreaming of new ribbons, and the next fair. There was but one waking, and that one was the pretty Phœbe. My father approached the casement silently, where, to direct him, a flickering light was visible. His tap was answered promptly;—the maid of the inn appeared, dressed and ready to accompany him; and, as the window was low, the gallant major received her in his arms, and deposited her safely on the ground.

"Laws, how you do stop one's breath!" said the *soubrette* archly. "I should suppose on this occasion you had no kisses to dispose of. How I pity Miss Ellen—she will be suffocated before you reach Gretna. But, hush!—we must be silent. I am half afraid to venture, for I am certain Mr. Harrison's keepers are afoot. There has been sad havoc lately among the pheasants, and the squire is outrageous, and determined to detect the poachers. Little does he imagine, while he is intent only on preserving game, that it would be far more necessary for him to protect his daughter. His keepers were drinking at the tap this evening, with three or four discharged soldiers whom he has hired as assistants. Are we not a daring party to venture to the house at midnight? But, major, I was so frightened after you left us this morning. You were scarcely clear of the village, before down came that nasty fellow with the red nose, whom you saw at the bar when you were bidding me good-by. And Lord! he did so question me about you. Well, when he was gone some time, the squire himself rode up to the door, and called out father. What passed I cannot guess, but the conversation was very earnest, and I half-imagined that I overheard your name. Yet, if Miss Ellen has been prudent, and made preparations for her journey without creating suspicion, we can have little to fear. God grant we may not be interrupted! a failure now would ruin your hopes and her happiness."

While Phœbe was speaking, the party notwithstanding the extreme darkness, reached the wicket and unlocked the door,

and advancing cautiously through the shrubbery, halted at the clump of evergreens which had sheltered the gallant major on the preceding evening.

Their vigil was a short one. In a few minutes the drawing-room window opened, and a figure was instantly seen. My father stepped silently from his ambuscade. "Ellen, my own loved Ellen!" he murmured.

"I am ready, dear Blake," replied a sweet voice, whose smothered sobs told how fearfully she was agitated.

"Haste, gentle love!" said the enamoured soldier, as he received the trembling girl in his arms, and pressed her to his bosom tenderly.

"Arrah! bedershin.\* No love-making, major dear, if you please at present," said Mr. O'Brien as he shouldered a trunk.

"On, gallant sir," whispered Phœbe, who took possession of a dressing-case, while the lover passed his arm for support around the beautiful refugee, and endeavoured to assure her that all danger was at an end. And so thought Denis O'Brien.

"Come along, Phaybe, my jewel!" he exclaimed to his fair companion, "Would ye turn the light of yeer eye, if ye plese, upon the path, for a darker night a man never marched on. Holy Patrick!" he continued, "it's yourself that stood our friend. They may talk of St. George and Saint Denis—and he's my own blessed namesake; but Patrick awourneein, give me yourself at a pinch against the calendar. By all that's beautiful, you're the daacentist saint that ever a sinner crooked a leg to!"

"Silence!" said my father, interrupting this ebullition of pious gratitude. "In a few minutes, my Ellen, we will be secure from all pursuit. Forward!"

"Stop!" thundered a loud voice, as five or six men sprang from the evergreens where they had been concealed, and threw themselves upon the refugees. An instant scuffle succeeded. The women shrieked; Denis asked no questions, but pitched away the trunk, and hit down two of the assailants, while his master prostrated the man who seized him, and shook himself by a powerful exertion clear of a second opponent. Ellen clung to her lover's arm; and though she impeded his efforts at defence, her presence protected him from the violence of the attacking party, who appeared to

\* Anglice. Be quiet!

turn their chief vengeance against the unlucky attendant. But Denis, to use the parlance of "the fancy," was a "troublesome customer." He was not a person to be easily overpowered. Many a hard knock he received, and to all he made a conscientious return. His earlier accomplishments in hurling and foot-ball were not in this extremity forgotten. He was reputed in Connaught to be "mighty handy with the foot"—the darkness was favourable to the exercise of this talent; and it was rather difficult to decide whether the feet or fists of Mr. O'Brien were most efficient.

While the man was offering a desperate resistance, the master's hot temper fired at this attempt to arrest him. To rob him of his mistress, was to rend the deer from the tiger.

"Stand off!" he cried with a deep imprecation, "or I'll make ghosts of some of you!"

"Lay hold of him!" responded the voice of one, who seemed the leader of the rest.

Ellen clung wildly to her lover's arm, for one of them had grasped her cloak, and he drew a pistol from his bosom.

"Now, by my soul's hope," he exclaimed, "the first man that lays a finger on the lady is a corpse!" Daunted by the determination with which it was apparent the lover would protect his mistress, the men fell back save one, and he grappled at the major. "Ha, fellow! wilt thou cross me? Lift but a finger, and I drive a bullet through your heart!" and he pressed the muzzle of the weapon against the stranger's breast. But Ellen shrieked—

"Oh! stop—hold your hand—it is—it is my father!"

"Nay, fear not, my love. Stand back, sir! Unhand my servant, fellows—What would you with us?"

"Give up your arms," said the leader.

"When I give up my life, and not till then," was the reply.

"Surrender!" exclaimed the father of Ellen.

Oh! do, dear, dear Blake—'tis madness to resist," cried the fainting girl.

"What, and lose thee? Never!"

"You will not lose me," she said in a low firm tone; "none shall separate us now."

"We will accompany you, sir," said my father, addressing Mr. Harrison: "walk on, we follow;" and the major uncocked and returned the pistol to his breast, and supporting Ellen, he entered the mansion of her father; Mr. O'Brien following in durance vile, while Phœbe brought up the rear, *in the close custody of one of the keepers.*

Mr. Harrison, when they entered the hall, called loudly for lights, which he ordered to be placed in the dining-room. Danger, imminent, inevitable danger, has, it is asserted, sometimes changed the coward to a hero, and the extraordinary events of this night, had a singular effect upon the youthful and timid maiden. Aware that there was no alternative left her but a decided assertion of free will, she determined to brave the worst consequences of parental anger, and dare the denunciation of her father's eternal displeasure. Her lover felt the gentle pressure of her arm against his; he turned his eyes, still flashing with excitement, upon those of his gentle companion, and he read there a look of confiding love and meek determination.

"You will not leave me, Blake?—Will anything induce you to give me up?" she said in a soft and entreating tone.

Her lover pressed her hand.

"Sooner, Ellen, shall my heart's blood colour the floor I stand on!" and, regardless of the presence of an angry father, he bent his lips to hers. Mr. Harrison noticed it; he turned pale as death, but controlled his feelings. The servant returning, announced that the dining-room was lighted.

"Have the kindness, sir and madam, to follow me," he said coldly, "and let the other prisoners stop here."

"Prisoners—we're no prisoners," exclaimed Mr. Denis O'Brien. "Phaybe, darlin, don't mind him; we're only what they call upon parole, and that manes that we'll nather smash heads nor break windows, but just go quiet and asy. Arrah! honour bright, ould gentleman; or say the word, and by Jasus, we'll fight it over again." But this master gave a signal which the valet appeared to comprehend. "Oh, I see—it's to settle terms of surrender, as we used to say in Holland. Some of ye, and the devil speed yeer manners! might have handed one a drop of drink, after the tossing and tumbling we had without. *Mona mondiaoul!* if iver I was so flustered with an insignified skrimage; I'm as hot as if I had been at the clearing of a pattern."

"Bring the fellow some ale," said the master of the house; and while Denis was left to discuss a tankard, his master with the "old man's daughter" on his arm, was ushered into the lighted chamber.

The scene was an uncommon one. Mr. Harrison settled himself coolly in his accustomed arm-chair; the soldier firmly confronted him, while Ellen, half sinking with terror and dismay, clung to him heavily for support. There was

on her father's countenance a cold, and withering, and passionless resolution, which augured badly for his offending child, if any hope had remained of pardon. He scanned the major over from head to foot, and read in the bold and reckless bearing of his daughter's lover that before him was an unbending spirit that neither present threats nor future consequences could waver for a moment. He glanced at his only child, and, momentary as the look was, upon both the effect was powerful. A paleness covered his face, which before had been flushed with subdued passion, while Ellen quivered like an aspen in the breeze. The lover noticed her distress. There was wine upon the table, and filling a glass, he carried it to her lips—an effort of which agitation rendered herself incapable. Several minutes passed in silence: at last the old gentleman spoke.

"Your name, sir?" he said, addressing my [father, whom he continued to question.

"Cæsar Blake."

"Your country?"

"An Irishman."

"Your calling?"

"A soldier."

"Your rank?"

"A major upon half-pay.

"I seldom notice military matters, but I believe you were lately removed from your regiment: may I ask for what crime?"

"For none: I took upon myself the consequences of a youthful folly which others were engaged in, to whom the results might have been ruinous."

"What was the offence, then?"

"Covering a chimney with a horse-cloth."

"Humph!—a sensible exploit. Have you any means?"

"But small ones."

"Name them?"

"Regimental half-pay, and one hundred a year from my brother."

"What brought you here to night?"

"To carry off your daughter."

"You are lovers, it would appear, and she was cognizant of the design. How was your intrigue carried on?"

"You must use a more correct term if you expect a reply from me."

"Humph!—well, courtship be it!"

"I met her in the stage-coach by accident—loved her, wooed her, won her."

"You have achieved a wondrous conquest, as you imagine?"

"I think so; I have won one that will make me happy."

"Will you wed her against my wish?"

"Most assuredly, if Ellen will consent."

"Did you point a pistol at my breast to-night?"

"I did."

"Was it loaded?"

"Yes, with a brace of bullets."

"Would you have shot me?"

"Certainly, had you persevered in detaining me, and I been unapprised by Ellen who you were."

"Who is the cut-throat who accompanies you?"

"I presume you mean my servant."

"Who is the quean who roams through private parks at midnight with idle renegades?"

"She is no quean, nor I a renegade."

"Oh, your pardon!" was replied sarcastically. "Well, who is that modest gentlewoman whom we found among the bushes?"

"Daughter to the landlord of the Cross Keys."

"Ho-ho! am I then betrayed by my own servants and dependants?"

"Certainly not: he of the Keys knew nothing of the attempt."

"And you will marry my daughter, although I peremptorily forbid it?"

"I have already answered you."

"Enough, Sir."

He rose from his chair, filled a glass of wine, drank it, took two or three turns across the chamber, then seating himself, fixed a searching and unmoved look upon his trembling daughter.

"Ellen," he said in a low and tremulous tone, that might either be occasioned by anger or affection—"Ellen, attend to me, for it is probable that this is the last time I may address you. How is it that I find you regardless of the duty you owe to me as your natural protector—regardless of brilliant prospects of rank and opulence, which, in your own country, and among your own connexions, you may realize when you please? How comes it that duty and interest are alike abandoned, and that you sacrifice all to share the shattered for-

tunes of a disbanded soldier, and for aught you or I can tell a profligate and a beggar?"

My father's cheek reddened, his eye blazed, his blood boiled, and it was easy to observe that there was a volcano labouring in his breast that required but small additional insult to explode.

"You cling to him," continued Mr. Harrison—"him, the acquaintance of some hours, and you leave me. Well, be it so. I shall ask you but a few questions: take heed, weak girl, for on your answers it depends, whether I shall pardon your disobedience, receive you as my child, proclaim you as my heiress, or cast you from me a worthless and repudiated daughter. Hear me!—you have five thousand pounds when at age, to which none can gainsay your right; I, if you are deserving, will leave you twelve thousand pounds a-year. If you have been hitherto too much in confinement, you may with my full concurrence mix in the world, and wed a man your equal."

Ellen shook her head, and Mr. Harrison continued.

"Well, I shall not press that union if you dislike it; in this, or any other matter, I will assert no parental authority: if you are not obedient from a sense of duty, I will not seek it by compulsion. Reply to me with candour, and then determine by whom you will abide—your father or yonder gentleman."

He paused, and seemed to hesitate; but promptly he thus continued:

"You love him?"

"Dearer than life!" returned a feeble voice, so inarticulate as to be almost inaudible.

"And will you for him give up home and father, fortune, kindred, country?"

"All will I give up if required. But, O my father, pardon me, pardon him! and make us for life your slaves."

Mr. Harrison coldly waved his hand.

"Pause," he said, "before you repeat this resolution, for, let it be repeated, and the same roof shall never cover us again."

There was a momentary, a dreadful silence. Ellen raised her eyes; she looked upon the cold marble countenance of her father, she met the fond and anxious glances of the handsome stranger, and love prevailed.

"Wilt thou abide by him?"

"Till death!" she murmured, and fainted in her lover's arms.

"It is settled," replied Mr. Harrison, as he rang the bell and ordered his own carriage to the door immediately; while the major placed Ellen in a chair, and bathed her lips and temples with water. Kneeling beside her, he called her by every term of endearment, and in two or three minutes he saw her sufficiently recovered.

While this scene was passing, Mr. Harrison stood a looker on, with his back against the mantel-piece, until the carriage wheels were heard. In a cool and collected voice he ordered Miss Ellen's trunks to be put in.

"You are bound," he said, turning to my father, "I presume, to Scotland, for I trust you mean my daughter honourably;" and a bitter smile crossed over his pale and sarcastic countenance. Again my father's cheek blazed. "Nay, gallant sir, do not irate; I know little of the world, but I have heard that sometimes these midnight meetings end with scanty ceremony. Might I request you to favour me with a certificate of marriage, as soon as this prudent and dutiful young lady becomes an honoured wife?—Give me my writing-desk." It was brought, and he unlocked it, then turning to his daughter, he continued—"You must not leave this house a beggar," and, averting his head, he held a note-case towards her. She, poor soul, made a last desperate effort—she flung herself at his feet, and clasped his knees in speechless agony. But Mr. Harrison had an iron heart and iron nerves, and he coldly disengaged himself. "The carriage waits, sir," he said, addressing the major: it will convey you to the next stage. You had better secure that pocket-book: it contains all you will ever get from me—one thousand pounds. I once invited you here, but now you are an intruder;" and retiring from the room, his steps were heard deliberately pacing the corridor, as if nothing unusual had occurred.

My father raised his lifeless bride and bore her through the hall: none resisted him; Denis jumped up behind the carriage—Phoebe had disappeared in the general confusion—and, on a wild and fearful night, my mother deserted her home. The park-gates closed after her for ever—she flung herself distractedly into her lover's arms, "and now the world was all before her."

## CHAPTER V.

## NEWSPAPERS AND A DRAGGING HOME.

And such paragraphs in the newspapers.  
*The Rivals.*

O'Roarke's noble feast will ne'er be forgot,  
By those that were there, and by those that were not.  
*Old Ballad.*

AFTER my mother's marriage she accompanied my father to Ireland. They delayed a few weeks in Edinburgh, under the plea of seeing that ancient and interesting city, but in reality, from a hope that some channel for a reconciliation might open between Ellen and her irritated parent.

Probably the wish expressed by the latter, that a certificate of his daughter's marriage should be transmitted, encouraged this expectation. The major accordingly obeyed his wishes; and in forwarding a document from the celebrated artist of Gretna, enclosed it in a manly and respectful letter from himself, in which he requested to be forgiven for the step he had taken. Poor Ellen also accompanied her husband's epistle with a strong appeal to the feelings of her father. In due course of post the receipt of the certificate was formally acknowledged by Mr. Harrison, the soldier's letter totally unnoticed, and his lady's returned with an unbroken seal. This latter circumstance the major concealed from his gentle bride, who was already suffering under the effects of parental displeasure.

In all besides, Ellen was truly happy. Her's was a heart formed for a tender and undying attachment. Before she wedded, she loved her husband with girlish romance, but now she idolized him as woman will, when she turns the undivided affections of a warm heart upon one sole and cherished object. Without a murmur she prepared to leave her native land; and strong in all-confiding love, consigned every hope of happiness to one comparatively a stranger. While on the evening preceding their embarkation, he pictured the lonely spot on which the house of his fathers stood; while he described rude hills and savage scenery, and a wild population professing another faith, and speaking a different tongue—"And wilt thou venture thither, Ellen?"

Clasping him in her arms, she turned her soft expressive

eyes on his, as she repeated the beautiful passage from Scripture:

"Whither thou goest I will go. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God!"

The reception my mother met from my father's family was as enthusiastic as she could have anticipated. Before the gallant Cæsar had even intimated to his brother, as "head of the house," any intention upon his part of committing matrimony, the English newspapers teemed with an account of his elopement with "the beautiful heiress of the wealthy Mr. Harrison." The singular cause that induced him to retire from his regiment was still fresh in public recollection, and the absurd manner in which these two exploits were ridiculously coupled in the same paragraphs was indeed provoking enough. The *Morning Post* thus announced my father's marriage:

"Major C-s-r B——ke, who, it will be remembered, abruptly retired from the 18th some months since, for stopping up a chimney-flue, by which two persons were unfortunately suffocated, passed through Carlisle on Sunday last, in a carriage-and-four, accompanied by the beautiful heiress of Stainsbury Hall. No pursuit after the fugitives was attempted, as Mr. H-rr-n lies without the least hope of recovery, from a wound of a pistol ball received in the unfortunate *mélee* that occurred on the recent occasion. The report that two keepers and the major's servant are dead, is, at least, premature. Of the recovery of one of the former we know that sanguine hopes are entertained."

The *Morning Chronicle* thus delivered itself:—

"We have often to lament the culpable inaccuracy of some of our contemporaries. In a morning journal of yesterday, a very imperfect statement is given of a recent occurrence in high life, of which we have been in full possession, but which, through delicacy to the feelings of the parties concerned, we have abstained from noticing. It will be a subject of gratification to the numerous and distinguished connexions of "both the houses," to learn that Mr. H——n, whose leg it was found necessary to amputate above the knee, bore the operation well; and that the gallant ex-major, after having the ball very skilfully extracted by Dr. Drench, of Newark, was able to proceed to Gretna with the agitated but beautiful bride. The domestic who unhappily lost his life on this lamentable occasion, was under-butler at Stainsbury Park where he had lived for fifteen years and a half, greatly re-

spected. He leaves a widow and seven young children to lament his premature death."

"*The Globe*," had another version of "the affair," from which, however, "*the Sun*" took care to differ. "*The Evening Mail*" denied the suffocation point-blank; and "*the Courier*" assured the world, that neither man, woman, nor child was killed, wounded, or missing, save and except the young lady and a poodle-dog, which latter, by the accidental falling of an imperial, had been maimed for life. Now, though all this was to the parties very provoking, and particularly annoying to Mr. Harrison, yet it *éclated* the business gloriously in Connaught. Nothing could have been more consonant to the general taste of the aristocracy of that favoured corner of the earth. First, there was an elopement. Second, it was with an heiress. Third, the successful swain was a member of "the tribes"—a genuine scion of the *ould stock*. Fourth, there were divers lives lost on the occasion. Fifth, judging from conflicting statements, there must have been a general *rookawn*,† without which a runaway match would not be worth a straw. In short, it was unanimously resolved, that Caesar Blake was "a broth of a boy;" that his lady, in person and purse, would be a useful addition to the neighbourhood; and that if elderly gentleman, under-butlers, and poodle-dogs interrupt half-pay majors, they must abide the consequences. To this general commendation, even Miss Sally Macnamara, oblivious of stuffed flues and false imprisonment, magnanimously assented.

My mother's journey into Connaught was one of novelty and interest. She had been hitherto secluded, and almost caged from infancy within her father's mansion, and to her the world was new, strange, and imposing. Mr. Harrison from boyhood had indulged a general dislike to female society. He married, rather as a matter of family necessity to perpetuate his name, and prevent his large estates from passing to a collateral branch. He had lost his wife soon after his union; and whether their tempers had been dissimilar, or that he had a fancy to remain unshackled, he ever afterward eschewed "the holy estate." Had Ellen been a boy, he might have probably bestowed more attention in cultivating the temper, and gaining the affections of his only offspring. But in childhood Ellen was confided to a nurse and governess; and

\* The most ancient families in Galway are known by this title.

† Rookawn, in English, means a general row.

when she approached maturity, her father was more solicitous to estrange his daughter from the world, than, by a judicious introduction to society, correct the deficiencies inseparable from an imperfect education. It is true, that from competent instructors she had acquired the usual routine of fashionable accomplishments. She learned languages, understood music, was conversant with books, but perfectly unacquainted with mankind. Hence her rapid and romantic attachment to my father might have possibly originated; and with an ardent imagination and feeling heart, no wonder that her fancy overcame her prudence. She had no countervailing passion to check the first out-breakings of youthful passion. To her father she looked with reverence; but she looked with fear. There were no sympathies between them. She lacked an object on whom to bestow her young affections; and one like Cæsar Blake, handsome, showy, imposing, and *distingué*, was the likeliest person in the world to obtain them.

As the major and his bride landed at a northern port, their route to Connaught lay through a desolate but romantic country. The language, the scenery, and the people, were new to the pretty *sasanach*.\* The risk of traversing a kingdom on the eve of a convulsion, and where a civil war had already broken out, was alarming to one who had scarcely passed the boundaries of her father's park. Every group of peasants alarmed the timid traveller, for every thing bespoke apprehension and insecurity. The preparations of her husband and his attendant against attack; the frequency of military posts; the marching of troops; the occasional interruptions from patrols; and even her husband's communications with the peasantry in a strange tongue—all tended to divert my mother's attention, and prevent her from dwelling upon the home she had deserted, and the parent of whom her own act had bereaved her.

The bleak and uninteresting country between Enniskillen and Sligo had been safely passed; and after a necessary rest, the travellers proceeded to cross the wild but romantic baronies of Tireragh and Tyrawley. That mountain-road, destined to witness soon the movements, of an invading army, was still quiet—and having reached the boundary of Galway, my father stopped at a solitary inn, where the carriage of his kinsman was in waiting.

The sun was setting gloriously on Lough Corrib, and that

\* A term applied to the English.

magnificent sheet of water was blazing in the red stream of departing day. Around, mountain was piled on mountain; their dark and rocky bases, finely contrasted with their pointed summits, now covered with a cap of snow. For miles the road was cut through the declivity of a hill, leading through defiles or overhung by precipices, which to a timid traveller, were alarming enough. The last gleam of daylight disappeared as the carriage cleared a deep mountain gorge, and entered a flat and extensive valley, rendered additionally gloomy by the height of the hills which on either side shut it in.

At the extremity of this highland glen, the ancient mansion of the Blakes was erected. The major in the feeble moonlight, endeavoured to point out the edifice to his bride, and directed her attention to the dusky outline which was indistinctly visible. While she looked in the direction, lights appeared and vanished, while on the right and left of the road, others danced along the hills, or flashed through the copse wood; and at the extremity of the glen, a ruddy flare from a stationary fire was discernible. The fair traveller was about to inquire what those meteors were, when the carriage turning an angle of the road, disclosed a dark mass of human beings moving rapidly toward them. Suddenly a wild yell arose from an adjacent hillock, a horn was shrilly blown, a thousand torches were lighted up, and the road, the rocks, and every rising ground, appeared crowded with a countless multitude of fierce and savage-looking people. A number of them rushed forward—the carriage stopped—and a tremendous shout echoed through the valley. Ellen screamed, and clung to her husband for protection. "Gracious God!" she exclaimed, as the horses were being taken off; "are they about to murder us?"

"Arrah! no, my lady," replied the well-known tones of Mr. Denis O'Brien; "they're only going to *drag your honour home!*"\*

"*Drag me home!* what does this all mean, my love?" she said, addressing my father.

"Nothing, dear Ellen, but that the tenants are come here to bid you welcome in their own wild fashion, and conduct you to my brother's house. You have nothing to apprehend

\* *A dragging home*—is the conveying the bride to her husband's house with a full attendance of all the clan.

from them ; for there is not one of these men who would not die to protect you."

Even with this assurance, my mother's heart beat violently, as she looked on the formidable escort that on every side surrounded the carriage. The lurid glare of torch-light, the fierce and savage air of the men, their wild yells, and wilder gestures, the scene, the hour—all were calculated for effect, and made, accordingly, a lasting impression upon the timid stranger.

In half an hour, a huge ivy-covered archway admitted the vehicle, and an ancient castellated building was seen at the extremity of a long straight approach, having on each side a row of stately elms. A fire of immense size was blazing before the house, and a myriad of women and children flitted backward and forward, and returned yell for yell to the crowd, that encircled the carriage as it advanced slowly along the avenue. At the grand gate a group of young girls, bearing a garland formed of artificial flowers, interspersed with laurel branches and gay-coloured ribbons, headed the procession. A shout that pealed over dell and mountain, welcomed the bride on entering the domain, and a salvo from some small guns upon the battlements of the castle made a suitable response. A dozen pipers struck up "O'Roark's return to Connaught," while a thousand welcomes, in English and Irish were repeated from as many mouths.

From the denseness of the crowd, the carriage was obliged to draw up at some distance from the hall; but a personage of uncommon height descended the steps promptly, and buffering the mob aside, unclosed the door. "Cæsar, my darlin boy!"—"Manus, my dear brother!" were mutually repeated, as my father and the stranger grasped each other's hand. The latter took the bride gently in his arms, and pronounced some Irish words in a voice of thunder: a lane through the multitude was instantly opened, and lightly as if she had been an infant, he bore her up the steps, and into a huge hall crowded with persons of both sexes. Placing her on the floor, he looked at her for a moment; then pressing her to his bosom, he kissed her with a fervour that dyed her cheeks with blushes.

"Cead mille fealtagh, my pretty sister," exclaimed the herculean stranger; "Mona mondiaoul! but I'm proud of you, Cæsar Blake!" Then presenting her to a crowd of cousins, he surrendered up his fair charge to be kissed and congratulated *ad libitum*.

When the first hurry of salutations was over, the timid bride looked round to see if her husband was near her; but he was not in the hall. Through the open door, however, she recognized him, borne on the shoulders of the multitude without.

"They will not harm him?" she whispered to Denis O'Brien, who was bustling after his mistress with a cloak.

"Harm him!" ejaculated the valet with a stare; "if there was a man yonder that would say black was the white of his eye, by the holy trout of Killgeever,\* they would pitch him into the fire, as a gassoon\* would toss in the shinbone of a horse!"—and Denis was right, for the namesake of the redoubted Roman, after making a circuit of the lawn, was safely deposited on the steps.

The banquet was duly served—the pipes commenced lilting in the hall—the bottle circulated merrily—the mob outside danced, drank whiskey, shouted "Cæsar for iver!" and broke each other's heads—and all was a glorious chaos of fighting, love-making and intoxication.

Early in the night, the bride pleaded fatigue, and begged permission to retire, which was politely granted.

\* No fish in ichthyology, cuts a more distinguished figure than this celebrated trout.

There is a ruined chapel and holy well about a mile from the village of Louisburgh, much frequented by all good Catholics, who consider that a little penance and purgation in this life may clear off that large arrear which improvident sinners allow to accumulate with a kind of compound interest. This blessed well, in the year '98, was tenanted by a trout of great sanctity and immense size; he was a holy and a happy fish, for the pilgrims fed him to his heart's content, and he had nothing to do but eat drink, and amuse himself.

It happened that a party of Scotch fencibles had been detached from head-quarters to Louisburgh, and on their return, in passing the well, an ungodly Highlander, *sudente diabolo*, determined to abstract its blessed occupant. He did so, and on arriving at his barracks, proceeded to refresh himself. The fire was lighted, the trout duly prepared, and, amid the ribald jests of the profane soldiery, the devoted fish was tossed into the frying-pan: when, lo! with a clap of thunder, the trout flew up the chimney, and, without the loss of a scale, returned uninjured to Killgeever. There he lived for many a long year afterward, gladdening the hearts of true believers, until from age and obesity he went the way of all fish.

We lament to think that, from the infidelity of the times, persons may be found sceptical enough to question the truth of this miracle. If such there be, should they find it advisable to operate at a holy well for their soul's weal, we recommend them not to select Killgeever.

\* A boy.

One circumstance struck my mother as being singularly characteristic of the chieftain of her husband's clan. Before she retired, her new relative requested her to accompany him to the lawn, where the garland was erected on a pole, and the *elite* of the young peasants dancing beneath it. Ellen good-humouredly assented, and, leaning on his arm, passed through the crowd. The whiskey, which was distributed in awful quantities, had done its duty, if blows and kisses were a proof. A young fellow, who did not observe the chieftain's approach, flourished a cudgel so near my mother as to startle her. Manus Blake made a long stride to bring the offender within reach of his arm, and with a blow felled him to the earth, from which he of the cudgel appeared in no hurry to get up. This feat, however, did not even interrupt the sentence he was delivering, which, by the way, was a solemn assurance that a more peaceable and orderly set of subjects were not in possession of the king, God bless him! than his own good tenants of Blake Hall.

Afterward, when my mother expressed regret at the occurrence to Denis O'Brien, who attended her as closely as if he had been bred a page of honour—

"Arrah, my lady," said the lackey, "don't be after botherin' yer head about spalpeens of that sort, at all, at all: what the divil business had he to be handlin' a *boltheine*,\* good or bad, and it yer honour's *draggin'-home*? He's a bad member any how. I wonder if his jaw's broke? for a clout from the master—May the Lord strengthen his arm!—is liker a kick from a horse than a clip from a christian!"

With Denis's remark my mother fully coincided—for, in good truth, Manus Blake was a hard hitter.

## CHAPTER VI.

AN IRISH LODGE.—HARRIETTE KIRWAN'S MARRIAGE.

Oh ! did you ne'er hear of Kate Kearney?  
She lives on the banks of Killarney.  
From the glance of her eye, shun danger and fly,  
For fatal's the glance of Kate Kearney.

*Old Ballad.*

THE first month of my mother's sojourn in Castle Blake was an endless round of rude and racketty dissipation. From

\**Boltheine*, means the lesser moiety of a flail.

the corners of the earth all the collateral branches of the ancient name, congregated to welcome their English relative. As each personage was attended by a suitable following, befitting the high occasion of the visit, and in nowise particular as to the period of departure, large as the mansion was, it was marvellous how it could contain the crowd, who occupied every nook and cranny from the attic to the cellars. These multitudinous ramifications from the parent stem rivalled each other in their attentions to the bride. All seemed bent on offering and accepting hospitality; and so numerous were the invitations pressed upon my parents, that a whole year would not have enabled them to fulfil a moiety of the same.

Yet my mother was far from happy. Her gentle disposition was unsuited to the exuberant spirits with which all around were gifted. Her memory recurred to the unhappy circumstances attendant on her hurried marriage; and she remembered that it was unhallowed by a parent's blessing. True, when she looked upon her handsome husband, love found a powerful plea to atone for filial disobedience; but in her solitary hours the parting-scene with her angry and deserted father embittered her happiness, and saddened that halcyon season, which should, without any thing to alloy it, have succeeded her union with him whom she so devotedly loved.

Nor were other causes wanted to increase these regrets. One so secluded from the world till now, found herself suddenly thrown among strangers, and the member of a society constituted very differently from any she had been previously acquainted with. The cold and formal order of English visiting, the quiet and regulated character of its social intercourse, and the systematic arrangements of that home she had abandoned, painfully contrasted with the wild scene and wilder people, with whom she must be naturalized in future. Those now around her appeared a separate race from any she had been accustomed to. Careless of the present, reckless of the future, they acted from momentary impulse, and seemed indifferent whether the result was right or wrong. The women rode, visited, dressed, flirted, danced, and married. The men hunted, shot, played, drank, quarrelled, fought, and made friends again. Out of doors, there was clamour and confusion; within, a wasteful, irregular, comfortless course of dissipation, to which neither time nor tide appeared to place a limit. While my mother with gratitude acknowledged the kindness with which she was universally regarded, the very efforts to

prove attachment were overpowering to a timid stranger. To anticipate what she wished, to discover if possible aught that would give her pleasure, to mark her as the sole object of general attention and respect—all this was done; and yet the days when Cæsar hunted appeared interminable, and before the established order of Milesian banqueting would allow the unwilling reveller to steal from the late carouse, poor Ellen would count the weary hours as they sounded from the belfry, and pray for some peaceful home, where she might hold a more tranquil communion with him, for whom country and kindred had been left.

It was not long before an accidental disclosure of her feelings, apprized her liege lord that his wife would prefer a life of less excitement, to that which she led in Castle Blake. Whether from an anxiety to render her more happy than she appeared, or that his own wishes were favourably disposed to domestic quietude, my father expressed a ready assent; and a beautiful shooting-lodge at no great distance from his paternal mansion happening at the time to be unoccupied, he rented it immediately; and overruling all the objections of his hospitable brother, preparations were made for a speedy departure.

On a sweet spring morning, Cæsar Blake and his small household left the hall of his fathers to occupy their new abode. Wild as the approach to Castle Blake had looked to the fair stranger, on the memorable evening of her "dragging home," the scenery that surprised her then, was tame and common-place to that which her present route presented. The point to which their course seemed to be directed, was buried in the very heart of mountains, which appeared to present insuperable obstacles to any human effort to fix a habitation within them. To approach these highlands, a rude path had been scarped through the rocky bases of the hills, or carried over ravines and along the ridge of precipices, which nature had vainly intended as a barrier against man. While passing these defiles, my mother was terror-stricken at the fearful consequences which a horse starting or a broken trace might occasion; but these difficulties overcome, a scene of romantic grandeur was suddenly disclosed.

When the gorge of the mountain-pass was cleared, a long heathy valley, intersprinkled with grassy hillocks, presented itself. A chain of Alpine heights enclosed it at either side, and one of superior altitude to all the others, seemed to block up the extremity of the glen. Throughout the whole extent of the valley, a beautiful stream flowed with the capi-

cious irregularity that distinguishes a highland river; at one time winding sluggishly through a morass, and at another bounding over some ledge of whinstone; now creeping through a flat surface of verdant heath, and again brawling along a shrubby channel, half-choked with fallen rocks and masses of turf, which the violence of winter-floods detached from the sides of the mountain.

As the travellers neared the extremity of the glen, the source of the stream, along whose banks they journeyed, suddenly became visible. It was a long irregular sheet of dark-blue water, overhung by precipitous rocks, which sprang upward from the margin of the tarn.\* The black and beetling heights cast shadows on the deep waters beneath them, which, unruffled by a breath of wind, exhibited a surface dimpled into a thousand circles, by the rising of the trouts and gambols of the water-fowls. On the very apex of the mountain, to which a perpendicular wall of grey granite had forbidden human approach, two eagles had built an aerie. Sweeping in lazy circles round the nest, their wild and piercing screams disturbed the silence of the mountain-glens, while nothing beside was heard but the bleating of sheep and the rushing of the stream. Here the road appeared to terminate; but no human dwelling was visible on the dreary expanse of this lone valley.

When, however, the travellers reached the very margin of the lake, a fissure in the hill-side, deep and narrow as if riven through the mountain by an earthquake, offered them a road. They passed the chasm safely, and in a spot, wild, lonely and romantic beyond the power of imagining, the fairy edifice suddenly was seen.

It was a modern cottage, elegantly designed, and erected in a circular dell, formed by the bases of three precipitous hills. A small highland lake extended in front of the building, while about it pleasure-grounds were tastefully disposed, with gardens and shrubberies, and every detached building which modern luxury requires. Early as it was, roses bloomed through the trellis of the verandas; berries of pensile plants festooned the casements richly, while the evergreens contrasted their gay foliage with the forest trees, whose leafless branches were only breaking into bud. All around this secluded habitation bespoke the successful efforts of human cultivation, which, triumphing over natural obstacles, had

\* A highland lough.

formed a garden in wilderness—an oasis among brown heaths and naked stones.

Nor did the interior of the villa disappoint the expectations its exterior elegance might occasion: all within was in excellent taste, and that best resource in solitude, the library, had been formed with considerable judgment. My mother was delighted with her new residence: her quiet but romantic fancy had here every thing it panted for—here, with the man of her heart, and removed from the hurry of the world, the pretty visionary found in this highland glen “a paradise both pure and lonely.”

When Cæsar Blake readily gratified his lady's longing for retirement, he was not uninfluenced by private considerations. Marriage had sobered the wild soldier, and he was wearied with the endless racketing which in Castle Blake was the order of the day. His brother was a curious relic of “auld lang syne”—the priest declared him “ultimus Romanorum,” and in sooth he was one of the last of those Milesian potentates, to whom ancestral virtues and vices had descended regularly with the family estates. Manus Blake was, after his own manner, as proud as he, surnamed the “Morning Star;” with him, the usages of his forefathers were sacred, and the roof-tree of his mansion was, in his estimation, hallowed as the sanctuary of the church. His ideas of hospitality made it the first duty of life; and he believed that he held his revenues in trust for the entertainment of all that pleased to claim it. To him noise and excitement were indispensable, and the clamour of the field without, must be succeeded by “tipsy mirth and jollity” within. Although a benedict for several years, he was childless, and therefore wanted those endearing ties which alone can render domestic quietude durable. In politics he took no interest: he was too independent to truckle to the government, and too honourable and open-hearted to plot with the wretched demagogues of the day.

But Cæsar Blake had more cogent reasons than he thought it necessary to explain, which caused him to abridge his visit to his kinsman—a fair and dangerous relative had intimated her intention of honouring Castle Blake with her presence; and although she had bestowed her hand upon a lover, who had erst-while sighed in vain, the ex-major determined to avoid her.

During the period while my father had been absent, Harriette herself had not been unemployed. Deeply as she felt

mortified at the unceremonious departure of him who proved insensible to her attractions, the full measure of her wrath was reserved for the morning, when the object of his secret expedition first transpired, and his elopement was officially gazetted with all its varied accompaniments. To conceal her feelings at this annoying disclosure was impossible, and a burst of wounded pride and hopeless passion ensued, that to the iron nerves of Manus Blake himself, appeared alarming. For some days the deserted one secluded herself from all society; but on the fourth morning she surprised the family at the breakfast-table, and then and there, announced her immediate departure for the capital on a visit to her aunt. This was natural enough; none opposed her resolution, and she left accordingly for Dublin, greatly pitied by every female in the establishment, who declared her case a hopeless one—the disease was mortal, for the arrow was at her heart—and her next appearance would be, under a canopy of white plumes, on her route to Cahirmore, the last resting-place of the Kirwans. But they were wrong.

Harriette was “too fine an animal,” as a puppy in the — Light Dragoons termed her, not to be extensively addressed, and she might have entered into the holy estate more than once, had she pleased; for as the song goes—

“ Of lovers she’d plenty.”

But her fancy, not to say her heart, had never been engaged but by one, and on him her fascinations were thrown away. In the number of her suitors, a Mr. Donovan was probably the most ardent, as he was avowedly the most detested; and as he was a leading character in my father’s brief history, we must formally introduce him.

He was descended from an obscure family, became early an orphan, was apprenticed to a trade he disliked, left it without ceremony, and found himself at twenty-two an adventurer on the world, without a single friend or a second guinea. With neither talent, education, nor even good looks, to recommend him, he contrived to push his way to a commission through an underhand and dirty channel. His character was not uncommon: low-minded, but cunning, he possessed great self-possession and unmeasured impudence: a bully without being brave; a swaggerer, but not a gentleman. In every game of chance he was an adept, and lived by shifts and resources, which the unfortunate rage for play among the upper classes, tends to a certain degree to

egitimise. Many an unlucky dupe he directed to the road to ruin; and many a time from disastrous play, himself was reduced to the verge of destitution and despair. Generally disliked, he seldom retained a companion long, for, occasionally bad temper and bad manners overcame his habitual self-control. Hence he never continued long in a regiment: of course, his rank advanced not, and, a few months before the marriage of my father, he was finally removed from the army, being cashiered for shooting unfairly in a duel a young officer, whom he had plundered to his last guinea.

Mr. Donovan was unhappily no stranger to my father. Four years before, Cæsar Blake had been appointed to a company over his head, which he made certain, through secret influence, to obtain for himself. Smothering his rage, he marked my father for a victim. He tried play, but the young captain disliked it, and gradually Donovan's character became developed, and Cæsar Blake discovered, fortunately, before it was too late to remedy the mischief, that Donovan had nearly estranged him from every officer in the corps. The rage of his dupe was boundless, an explanation was demanded, and a scene ensued. For a moment Donovan essayed the bully: but it failed; my father was a top shot, and it was quite evident that in the event of a meeting, Captain Cæsar Blake would be very apt to shoot his best on the occasion. Mr. Donovan, therefore, prudently left the regiment, and from the moment he departed, his quondam dupe became first favourite with all around him.

When finally forced from the service, he arrived in Dublin without a shilling, and at a moment when his uncle, an opulent tradesman, was on the eve of dissolution. This relative of the disgraced subaltern, had, by the most despicable penury accumulated a considerable property. Although childless, he fancied to invest it in purchasing an estate, and he left Connaught to perfect this intention. His nephew had just arrived; he was utterly destitute: he asked assistance, and it was coldly refused.

Fortune is a slippery gentlewoman. Peter Donovan paraded the streets of Dublin for two days, supporting existence by the meanest subterfuges that desperate poverty could invent—and on the third morning he found himself worth two thousand pounds a-year. Wonderful was his luck; he who would not have bestowed a sixpence to save his nephew from the gallows, and who had drafted a will, and laid it before counsel, to guard even against the con-

tingency of his succession, dropped off before the document was arranged for signature, leaving to the person whom he abominated, every shilling which, through a long life, he had by every villainy managed to scrape together.

In his appearance Peter Donovan was uncommonly repulsive. He was tall, thin, shapeless, and inelegant; his face sharp, his cheeks hollow, with straight flaxen hair, and light eyes; in short, a *tout ensemble*, that man dislikes and woman loves not.

Such was the suitor who bowed at the shrine of the divinity, who more than once, had scornfully rejected his advances. Then, it is true, he was but a needy adventurer, and "of no estimation"—and Harriette, "faney free," was surrounded by a troop of admirers. He came now a wealthy wooer, and found the once haughty fair one in a very different mood from any which he had previously experienced.

Certainly, it required more self-control than Harriette ever pretended that she possessed, to enable her to assume a tolerable composure. Her overtures were rejected, her love despised, her charms undervalued, and a stranger preferred. One moment, in a storm of jealous rage, she could have stabbed her lover to the heart; and yet, when the gust of passion calmed down, tender recollections would occupy her thoughts, and she would dwell in tears and tenderness on the hours she had passed with that adored object, who was now lost to her for ever.

She was in this mood when the postman's knock was heard, and her maid handed in a Galway newspaper. Hastily it was opened, and Harriette's quick eye lighted on a flaming paragraph, descriptive of my mother's welcome at Castle Blake, and detailing the various festivities which evidenced the general joy at "the arrival of the rich and beautiful bride." The blood rushed to her face, till the veins were almost bursting. The beauty of her rival, the *éclat* of her reception, drove her nearly frantic. She flung the paper in the fire, and, in a paroxysm of passion, stamped over the carpet. "Cæsar," she muttered, "I loved you as I shall never love another! I existed only in your presence—I lived upon your smiles! I would have followed you to the world's end! I would have clung to you in beggary—I would have been to you more than woman ever was to man—your mistress—your minion—your slave!"

Now, by my hopes of heaven,\* I would drug the bowl, or  
whet the knife, that destroyed you!"

She was still in high excitement, when the door unclosed, and unannounced, Donovan stood before her. Flashing eyes and heightened colour bespoke her agitation, but they added to her natural charms—for she looked a beautiful *bacchante*. The man who could have seen such loveliness unmoved, must have been insensible indeed. Short was the interview that succeeded—Donovan offered his hand, and Harriette accepted it.

In a few days she knelt at the altar of God with a being she detested. Her vows of constancy and affection were "false as dicers' oaths," and she left the church, a perjured wife and wretched woman!

## CHAPTER VII.

### FRENCH LANDING.—NIGHT ADVENTURE.

But here I leave the general concern,  
To track our hero on his path of fame—

\* \* \* \* \*

The dying man cried, "Hold! I've got my gruel!"  
*Don Juan.*

TIME passed rapidly; month succeeded month, and the mountain retreat of Cæsar Blake bloomed in all its beauty. The eventful summer of Ninety-eight had set in with unusual sultriness, for it was the hottest that the oldest man could recollect. For weeks together, not a shower refreshed the parched earth, and a cloudless sun shone with an intensity, that appeared better suited to a southern sky, than to the humid and capricious climate of the Emerald Isle. The insurrection, which, for the past year had been on the eve of explosion, suddenly broke out upon the twenty-third of May, and after a continued scene of ferocious crime, in which a savage population and an excited soldiery, seemed to emulate each other in deeds of blood and rapine, it was suppressed, although, for many a month afterward, the country was devastated by banditti, and the towns disgraced by military executions.

The ferocious character of the Irish rebellion was not without exceptions. The Western insurgents were of milder

mood than their Leinster brethren; and plunder was the chief crime that marked the out-breaking of the peasantry in Connaught. Few lives were consequently lost among the loyalists, although the vengeance of the executive descended with frightful severity on the miserable adherents of the French, after the republican troops had surrendered at Ballinamuck.

Until the landing of Humbert, the ex-major remained quietly in his romantic dwelling—and from its remoteness, but vague reports of scenes of violence elsewhere transacted, reached this secluded family. While others left their houses, and flocked into garrison towns for protection, Cæsar Blake dwelt in his mountain-home without any apprehension. Indeed, he had little to fear: the shepherds and fishermen who lived among the hills, or occupied the little village on an inlet of the sea, contiguous to the lodge, were utterly unacquainted with passing events, and knew and cared about the progress of the insurrection as little, as though the scene had been placed in Japan.

As my father's isolated residence was entirely out of the line of operations of either royalists or rebels, he had nothing to apprehend but from straggling plunderers, and his own followers were quite sufficient to repel any aggression of that kind. Hence, in his highland retreat, he remained in undisturbed tranquillity; and while the storm was raging at a distance, the glen that contained his youthful bride was a sort of Goshen, where the danger that menaced life and property elsewhere was unknown.

It may be readily imagined, that the gallant major was not of a temper to remain inactive when martial scenes were passing in his father-land, had not other feelings restrained his military ardour. To leave the timid and beloved stranger with none but servants to comfort and protect her in the wild dwelling in which he had placed her, would be cruel and unmanly. As yet, no overt acts of violence had occurred; and it seemed, judging from appearances, that unnecessary alarm had been raised, and useless severity exercised by those functionaries to whom government had confided the safety of the country. Cæsar Blake, moreover, felt that he had been, on the occasion of his recent retirement from his regiment, very indifferently treated by the commander-in-chief; he considered himself an ill-used man, and resolved to remain a quiet spectator of a popular commotion, that he felt persuaded had been fostered for sinister purposes by those in

power, who had ample means of suppression in their hands, so soon as the political objects for which the storm was raised should be effected.

But these resolutions were at once abandoned, when a trusty courier brought him intelligence that the French had landed in force at Killalla. Love and pique were overcome by the master-passion of a soldier, and he determined to set off, without delay, for the head-quarters of the royalists at Castlebar, and join some regiment as a volunteer, until a battle should decide the fate of the bold invaders, and prove how far a French demonstration could produce a general outbreaking of the disaffected. Leaving his little garrison under the charge of Dennis O'Brien, he feigned an apology for a short absence, by pretending that important business called him suddenly to Castle Blake, and took a tender farewell of the gentle Ellen, who little imagined that her adored husband was leaving her arms for a battle-field.

Cæsar Blake selected the cool of the evening for crossing the mountains that divided the neighbouring garrison from his highland home. The dew was rising from the fen, the moon was dancing on the lake, and never had a lovelier evening closed upon the romantic valley he was quitting. Mounted on a trained and powerful charger, with pistols in his holsters, a sabre at his side, and a small valise behind the saddle, to contain a change of linen, the soldier, with his military-cloak flung round him, rode unattended along the path, which wound through the hills for several miles, before it reached the main road. All was silent as the grave, and nothing was heard at this sweet hour, but the challenge of the cock-grouse, or bleatings from the sheep-pens. Now and again the shepherd's dog, roused by the hoof-sounds of the traveller, alarmed the tenants of the lonely *bouillie*,\* but all else was quiet as the grave, and without interruption the belated traveller reached the defile, which united the mountain-path with the road that led to his destination.

This gorge into the hill-country was formed by a deep ravine between cliffs of grey limestone. The moonlight was shaded by the rocks, and the pass was dark and embarrassed by loose stones which had fallen from the face of the heights. The horseman was consequently obliged to ride with caution, and at a deliberate pace he entered the defile.

He had reached the centre of the pass when the foot-falls

\* *Bouillies*, are summer bivouacs, used by shepherds when depasturing their flocks in the mountains.

of an advancing traveller were heard. It was an awkward place to meet an enemy. My father tightened his reins, and drew a pistol from the holster; and next moment a rider appeared through the gloom.

"Who goes there?" demanded the soldier.

"Who are you?" responded the unknown horseman.

"Advance a step and I fire!" rejoined the major.

"That liberty I'll take first," was the cool reply, as a pistol flashed, and a bullet whistled past my father.

Cæsar was no sluggard. Promptly the fire was returned, and forcing his horse forward with the spur, in a second he was sword-in-hand alongside his assailant, ready to cut him down.

"Hold!" cried a voice, with a groan. "Your sword is needless, friend. The pistol did its duty. That shot broke my arm, and I surrender. But, good God! whom have we here? What! Cæsar Blake?"

"The same—Conolly! Is it possible?" and the riders mutually recognised each other.

"What a cursed chance!" exclaimed the wounded horseman. "Who the devil could have expected that you should at this late hour be wandering among the mountains. That scarlet cloak deceived me, and I took you for a patrol."

"And what brings you here, Conolly? No treason, I trust?"

"Why, my dear Cæsar, the truth may fairly out. I am sped for many a long day; and as the French say, *hors de combat*. Humbert is advancing on Castlebar, and I was despatched from head quarters to visit you, and raise the Galway people."

"Me!"

"Ay—you. No folly with friends. I know your heart is with us, and I have a splendid offer from the General. Why, man, you shall be '*en second*,' to himself!"

"Conolly, is this a time for fooling?" said the major.

"Fooling!" replied the disabled rider. "Heaven knows I am in sorry humour for that to-night. Why, my arm is shattered and lies as useless by my side as the scabbard of your sabre. No, faith, I know you are with us; for Donovan apprised General Hutchinson, that you were to hold a principal command. This you may depend on, for it comes through a secret agent, that acquaints us with all the drunken hogs are twaddling about, and the channel is sure."

"Conolly, you are sadly misinformed. I am at this mo-

ment on my way to join the king's troops, and old George has not a more devoted follower."

"Humph! After all he used you scurvily enough if that blanket and chimney business be as it was generally represented," said the stranger, with a sneer.

"No matter. I swore allegiance to old square-toes. That oath with me is sacred. Not but that I wish the good old gentleman had better military counsellors."

"You would not, however, betray me, Blake?"

"No more than sell my soul to the foul fiend."

"I thought so," said the stranger.

"I am," replied the soldier, "a loyal subject, but no spy to divulge the secret which a feather-headed friend communicated, without taking the trouble of asking whether I was with or against him."

"Alas! Cæsar, I am completely bothered."

"Be advised, my dear fellow, by me," returned the soldier. "Hasten to the lodge. Say you have been riding in the dark; that your horse came down, and your arm was broken, and you want it attended to. Remain quietly until the storm blows over, and you will not only save your limb, but most probably your neck into the bargain."

The wounded man was silent for a minute.

"You are right, friend Cæsar. I am useless now, and would only be an incumbrance. There are old women enough on both sides without me, and I should be an ass to stretch a rope, without the sorry satisfaction of striking a blow or two before I graced the gallows. But time presses you and me. Ride—for before twelve hours, the French will enter Castlebar."

"Nonsense," replied the soldier.

"Nay, honest Cæsar, it is true. And now, God speed you! I shall follow your advice, and avail myself of your kindness. A time may come; but no matter."

"Shall I be interrupted?" asked the royalist.

"Likely enough," replied the wounded horseman. "If you are stopped, inquire if 'the moon is near the full.' But ask the question *in Irish*. I must be off, for I can hardly keep the saddle. Confound you, Cæsar! how close you shoot, where none beside yourself and the owls can know a man from a haystack. And yet I levelled at you pretty correctly."

"Too close to be agreeable," replied the royalist; "I heard the whistle of the bullet."

"Well, that same is a comfort," said the wounded traveller. "There is a friendly hut not very distant, where I shall get my arm bandaged. And now, God speed thee! worthy descendent of a lucky Roman. Farewell." And turning his horse, the unfortunate cavalier rode off in an opposite direction to that taken by his opponent.

When my father cleared the defile, he found himself in safety on the coach-road. All danger was over; for the king's troops, no doubt, took care to keep the communication open. The major pricked merrily on, until about a mile from the mountain-pass, a long and narrow bridge, with its high and ill-constructed battlements, crossed a bold river. Built in the ancient style, its centre-arch rose so considerably as to shut from even a mounted traveller a prospect of the extremity. Cæsar rode forward without apprehension, until on topping the crown of the bridge, he found his farther progress barred by a crowd of men, whose various implements of destruction glanced in the moonlight, and told at once that they were of the insurgent party. The soldier reined up, and would have fallen back, but suddenly the other end of the bridge was occupied, and retreat impracticable. There was no time for deliberation; the enemy was before and behind him; the chances of danger pretty equal; and, like a good soldier, he chose that in front. Drawing his second pistol, he advanced steadily within a few paces of those who occupied the pass, when a rough voice in very indifferent English challenged him.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Whose friend are you?"

"The king's."

"You are a prisoner then," said a person who appeared the leader, dressed in a frieze great coat, and armed with a musket, which he presented at the traveller.

"A prisoner! To whom, pray?" was the firm reply.

"*To us Frinch!*" replied a second voice in broad Irish.

My father laughed heartily at the absurdity of the fellow.

"Stand back, fools!" he replied in their native language; "is the moon near the full, pray?"

"Pass on—*ballagh, faugh, a ballagh!*"\* exclaimed a score of voices, as he opened right and left. Mending his pace, the rider pushed on rapidly, and in an hour the lights in Castlebar appeared flaring in the paler moonshine.

\**Anglicized*, "Clear the road."

It struck the soldier as a remarkable want of military precaution, that, while it was known that a hostile force was in the neighbourhood, neither picket nor patrol were on the roads that led directly to the garrison. Close to the entrance of the town, for the first time, a yeomanry vidette challenged him ; but my father being personally known, prevented the loyalist from offering him any interruption, and unquestioned by any other, the major rode on, and halted at the barrack-gate.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE MESS TABLE—MARCH OF HUMBERT.

Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late ?

SCOTT.

In Heaven's name let us get some supper now,  
And then I'm with you, if you're for a row.

DON JUAN.

" **WHA** gangs there?" cried a Highlander, advancing his arms.

" A friend," replied my father, " open the gate ; I wish to speak with the general."

" Guard, turn out!" exclaimed the sentinel. " Guard turn out!" responded a second voice within. An immediate shuffling of feet and rattling of muskets succeeded, and apprised the late traveller that considerable ceremony would attend his untimely visit to the commander of the garrison. Presently an officer appeared at the wicket, and demanded his name and business. My father answered that he was a loyalist, and his business was private and momentous. " I suspect, notwithstanding," replied the Scotchman, " that ye stand a poor chance of seeing the generals to-night ; they dinna much like to talk with strangers over their wine : but I'll go see."

After an absence of some minutes, " the Highland ancient" re-appeared with a peremptory refusal. " The generals," he said, would na be disturbed ; it was na time, they said, to fash them wi' business—it would be time enough to-morrow." But the traveller was not to be repulsed by one refusal.

" The morning will be too late," he said ; " give that card to

General H——, and tell him I bear important intelligence which may require the promptest consideration."

A still longer time elapsed than when on his first embassy, before the commander of the guard returned.

"All's right," he said to the sentry; "Duncan, open the wee gate: lead in your horse, friend—and I'll conduct ye to the generals."

"The generals!—What, are any here besides general H——?"

"Aye, troth, are there: gin they be gude as plenty, we will be guy an weel commanded; and if they strike but half as hard as they drink, the de'il himsel' will na match them for a minute."

As he spoke, the major and his conductor reached the building where the commanders were assembled. Loud and tipsy merriment was heard within; and if Cæsar Blake expected to find the gallant leaders of the king's troops concerting military movements over the midnight lamp, he must have been marvellously disappointed. Passing a sentry at the door, and half a dozen orderlies loitering about the corridor, the ex-major was directed to the end of the hall; a mess-waiter in attendance opened a door, announced his name, and ushered him into the presence.

Albeit, though Cæsar himself had not been indoctrinated in military tactics at the feet of the most rigid disciplinarian, yet he was shocked and disgusted to witness a very unexpected scene. Though the country was in a state of insurrection, and an invading army within a few hours' march, he found the royalist commanders revelling at the mess-table, surrounded by their aids-de-camp and field-officers. There was scarcely an individual at the board who did not betray unequivocal symptoms of inebriety. Two personages were already *hors de combat* beneath the table—and others so far advanced toward that comfortable condition, as to warrant a safe conclusion that a similar fate awaited them. On glancing round the room, my father remarked two or three country gentlemen who commanded yeomanry corps intermingled with the regular bacchanalians, and caught the cadaverous scowl of Captain Donavan furtively directed at himself. Conolly's intelligence crossed his memory, and he darted a withering look at the husband of the inconstant Harriette; but the voice of General H—— recalled his attention from his quondam acquaintance.

"Cæsar, noblest of Romans!"—(hiccup)—"take a chair,

fill a bumper, and then tell us what the devil drives you here?" was the singular address.

"Hearing," replied the major, "of the landing at Killala I deemed it my duty to join his majesty's troops as a volunteer, and on my way to head-quarters, accidentally learned some news that appeared sufficiently important to warrant this late and unceremonious intrusion."

"What may the news be?" inquired one of the general officers, with a carelessness that half implied derision.

"Am I to communicate my intelligence *here*? Possibly it might suit a smaller audience," replied Cæsar Blake.

"All here, sir," returned the commander haughtily, "are the king's officers, or their faithful allies and fellow-soldiers; we have no secrets from either."

"Enough, sir," said the traveller; "my intelligence simply is, that the French are on their march, and Humbert moving rapidly on the town with all his disposable force."

"Ha-ha-ha!" roared the generals. "Ha-ha-ha!" repeated the aids-de-camp. "Ha-ha-ha!" re-echoed the captains of the yeomanry.

My father's cheek reddened. In a voice where suppressed rage was scarcely concealed, he replied—

"Were my information valueless, methinks at least it might have been received with that civility which the communications of one gentleman to another require and obtain. Pray, general, should this intelligence prove correct, would a French movement on the town be an event worth military consideration?"

"Undoubtedly, most gallant Roman, it would surprise us all. But sit down and wash the cobwebs from thy throat"—(for my father still continued standing;) "we may probably go to look for Humbert, but, believe me, Humbert will not come to look for us. Why, man, our advanced guard would be sufficient to cut him to pieces. Where, my friend, did you learn this idle story?"

"General H——," said my father, with seriousness, "you admit it to be of momentous consequence if true: now, from a source which I shall not disclose, but which I pledge a soldier's honour is worthy to be implicitly relied upon, I learned it; and you are now apprized of what I believe to be a fact, and it is for you and these gentlemen to act as you please."

The decisive tone of the ex-major appeared to create a sensation.

"And you consider your intelligence authentic!" inquired General H—.

"Can you doubt it?" observed General T—, with a sneer. "If report speaks true, none should be better informed of insurrectionary movements than the worthy major."

My father made two strides from the place where he had been standing, and confronted the last speaker.

"You will please to recollect, sir, that I am no longer subordinate to any, and that I acknowledge no superior in this room. I feel your taunt, and am no stranger to the rancorous source from which it emanated. Now, general, I shall briefly tell you what I am—a gentleman of as stainless honour and ancient blood as any that bears the King's commission: and furthermore, as true and devoted a subject. Does any here question my loyalty? 'Tis well—I should have told him to his teeth he lied. I know that at this table sits one villain; let him follow me outside the gate, and he shall there know how far my hand can defend my honour. You have now my tidings, gentlemen, such as they be, and tomorrow will tell whether they are false or true. Good night."

"Stop, stay, my dear fellow!" cried General H—, "d—n it, man, no offence was offered. I like your spirit—(hiccup.) You have been misinformed. But fill a glass—devilish sound claret—(hiccup). Depend upon it that all's right, and in a day or two you shall have a sight of the blue-coats, unless they have re-embarked already. Come, sit down."

"Excuse me, General. Farewell, sir," he continued, addressing the commanding officer who had so broadly insinuated his disloyalty. "A word at parting: when the scoundrel who traduced me next tells you that I am disaffected, whisper in his ear, that Cæsar Blake holds him to be a cold-blooded, gambling, murderous coward; and tell him, I would part with this right hand to free the world from such a miscreant as I believe him to be! Adieu, gentlemen: before tomorrow's noon you will decide whether my intelligence was fabrication, and whether you should have noticed the warning you have received."

So saying, he flung himself from the mess-room, leaving the bacchanalian group in great confusion and uncertainty. But this indecision lasted but for a moment, and the ex-major's alarm vanished with the next cooper. Daylight broke upon them ere they separated, as, with few exceptions, they were

respectively carried to their quarters by the orderlies in waiting.

When my father reached the gate, he found the subalterns waiting his return. His horse was standing at the guard-house door, covered with a watch-coat, and a highlander hand-rubbing him carefully.

"He's a bra' beast," said the commander of the gate, "an' it would be a pity to neglect him. I feared he might tak' cauld, so I threw a coat about him. I did another job too; one o' yeir pistels wanted loadin', so I took the leebury of tightening the flint and sticking in a cartridge. Here, man, tak' a drap—it's right Nantz—better brandy never topped a tongue: 'twill do ye gude, for the dew is rising heavy."

The kindness of the Scotch soldier struck my father forcibly.

"Thank you, comrade," he said; "possibly after to-morrow, you and I shall be better acquainted. This is my address;" and he handed him a card.

The Scotch ancient applied the address to a guard-room lantern, and with slow and precise intonation pronounced, "Maajor Cæsar Blake;" then lifting his eyes slowly, he said in an under-voice, "Ha'e ye any news, maajor?"

"None," said the traveller, as he tightened his girths, and led his horse through the wicket. "But," and he laid his lips to the Highlander's ear, "before six hours you may have an unexpected visiter, and, I fear, but a drunken reception to welcome him with."

Donald paused, and scratched his head; "I ken it a'," he muttered; "aye, troth, it's a like eneugh; I feared as much before it;" and he wrung my father's hand and they parted.

When the major rode from the gate, he began to consider where he was to seek a lodging. Two o'clock pealed from the jail clock, and he remembered that every inn and public-house was filled to the very garrets, while private residences were crowded with numbers of refugees, who flocked for safety from the adjacent country. In this difficulty he recollect ed that a female relative still remained at home, and occupied her mansion, while others, less exposed, had been abandoned; and as his horse was untired, he decided upon riding out to his kinswoman's, rather than institute, at this early hour of the morning, a tedious, and perhaps bootless research after a bed and stable. Accordingly, as he had been furnished with the parole and countersign by his Highland

friend, the traveller found no difficulty in passing a few straggling videttes, and in less than an hour, drew bridle before his kinswoman's door.

The late summons of the ex-major occasioned considerable alarm, and he was reconnoitered from divers spy-holes, until his identity was satisfactorily ascertained. Then was he freely admitted; his horse stabled, fed, littered, and left to his repose; while the master, in due honour, was welcomed by his fair relative, and found a supper waiting for him, that after his long ride was highly acceptable.

When the traveller had sufficiently refreshed himself, his hostess urged him to retire, and endeavour to procure a little sleep; but the morning sun was streaming through the curtains of the room, and my father preferred to lie down without undressing for an hour or two on a sofa. It was well that he so determined. In less than half an hour, a horse at speed entered the court-yard; the family rapidly collected; and the rider's communication at once assured my father that the French were actually advancing, and by a very different route from that by which they might have been expected,

The pontoon-road, which skirts the beautiful and picturesque shores of Lough Conn, and connects the towns of Castlebar and Ballina, was not then formed, nor was there a bridge over the confluence of the lakes, the passage being effected by means of a bateau or punt, from which the road appears to have derived its name. At that time there were two routes by which Castlebar could be approached from the north. By the left, the lower, or Foxford one, afforded an easy line of march to an army with cannon and field equipage. On the right of the lakes, the second communication was opened by the old mountain road. But this route was hilly and difficult, and intersected by numerous highland streams, many of which being without bridges, presented fords barely passable by a horseman, but impracticable to every species of carriage. Nearly mid-way, this road cuts the mountain-chain that rises from the shores of the lake, and winds through the romantic pass of Barnagee. Here, for nearly two miles, the line is a succession of defiles, overhung by masses of rock, scarped along the brows of precipices, and every where commanded by heights which enfilade its entire extent. To transport the *materiel* of an army along this line would be impossible. Hence, the lower road was the only one deemed worth the trouble of observa-

tion, and beyond patrolling it for two or three miles without the town, the mountain line was totally neglected.

When Humbert decided to march direct on Castlebar, he was well aware of the great disparity of his own force, compared with that of the royalists. He mustered about nine hundred infantry, and some fifty hussars, with two brass six-pounders; these, from the lightness of their carriages, termed "curricles guns." Upon the guerilla mob that would accompany him, he reckoned little. They were numerous, it is true, and partially clothed and appointed by the republicans; but, out of the field, they were impatient of control and difficult to organize; and in it, nothing but an armed rabble. Opposed to him was a regular force of full three thousand men of all arms, with several hundred irregulars attached, who in discipline might be inferior to troops of the line, but in spirit second to none in the service. The cavalry were numerous and well mounted; the artillery highly efficient; while, confident in numbers, fresh, in position, and well aware of the smallness of the force that threatened them, the loyalists had every advantage. They knew that an immense force was marching to their support, and converging on every point whereon it was possible for the French general to operate. The roads were good, the communications open, and the yeomanry corps perfectly acquainted with the localities of the country, and therefore admirable guides for a commander to depend upon. With such a force opposed, and having these local and contingent advantages, it was a bold and hazardous determination of the French general to become assailant—nothing to rely on but his own abilities, and no resources but in the tried bravery of a handful of veterans.

Humbert was aware that he must strike an immediate blow, no matter how much the chances of success might be against him. To attempt to organize his rebel allies would have been absurd; for in a few days an overwhelming force would have been upon him. His only hope, therefore, was in making a powerful impression; and to confirm the disaffected, or maintain himself in the country, turned on the success of a prompt and desperate attempt on Castlebar. Accordingly, at midnight, he marched from Ballina, by the lower road. This movement, as he anticipated, was directly discovered, and intelligence despatched to apprise the English generals. To mask his true route, Humbert kept the Foxford line for several miles; but suddenly wheeling to the right, by a cross road, he turned his face to the hills, and

falling into the mountain-path, advanced on Castlebar by the defiles of Barnagee.

Fortune favours the bold—a single gun, a company of light infantry, could have held him in check, and maintained the pass, until he must have been crushed by superior numbers, or driven back on Ballina; and the latter, in its consequences, would have been as ruinous as the former.

It was a singular chance, that my father was fated to bring confirmation of the tidings which, a few hours before, had been so unceremoniously declared unworthy of belief. The house of his relative was situated at the bottom of the hill through which the pass of Barnagee winds, and from its remote locality, had not been deserted by the occupants, as other mansions were, on the first intelligence of a French descent. A servant had, on the preceding evening, been despatched to see that the cattle on a distant farm were in safety. On his return with the first light, he observed from a high ground, the arms of the advancing troops glittering in the earliest sunbeams that topped the summit of the hills. Without stopping to observe their numbers or appearance, he spurred on to give his mistress notice, and thus enable her to reach the garrison of Castlebar; and a more unexpected and alarming messenger never disturbed a household than honest Bryan, when he announced that “the French, horse and foot, were at his heels at Barnagee.”

My father promptly mounted his horse, and rode off to ascertain the fact: none of the domestics had any fancy to lessen the distance between themselves and the invaders, and the gallant major made his *reconnaissance* alone.

He rode rapidly to the pass: not a human being was visible, and the country was more quiet even than on ordinary occasions; but when he gained the crown of the defile, a large body of men in blue uniforms, was seen moving rapidly on in close column.

It was quite apparent to the practised eye of a soldier, that the regulars were accompanied by a large insurgent mob, and it was difficult to say what part of these allies appeared the most contemptible. The clownish and unsoldierly look of those whom the invaders had clothed, was most ridiculous, and contrasted with the villainous and banditti character, that cross-belts over frieze jackets gave to the remainder of the rabble.

Cæsar Blake pressed forward, and gained a height that commanded an uninterrupted view. At the bottom of this

hill a mountain-torrent had formed a deep ravine across the road, and the soldier suspected, that Humbert would find no inconsiderable difficulty in transporting his cannon over this formidable chasm; nor was he wrong. After a considerable delay, he saw one gun extricated by immense exertion, but the carriage of the other broke down: every attempt to disengage it was useless, and the impatient Frenchman spiked and abandoned it, and continued his march with but a solitary six-pounder.

The *reconnaissance* of my father had been noticed, and some well-mounted men detached from the main body spurred up the hill; but as Cæsar had already ascertained correctly the number and description of the French force, he had nothing more to learn, and rode off to announce the veritable march of Humbert.

His horse, in fine condition and sufficiently rested, carried him forward at a slapping pace; and within six hours, as he had prophesied, from the period of his first visit, he re-entered the barrack-gates of Castlebar, to herald the rapid advance of the small but formidable corps.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE ROUT OF CASTLEBAR.

And there was mounting in hot haste ; the steed,  
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,  
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,  
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war ;  
And the deep thunder, peal on peal afar ;  
And near, the beat of the alarming drum  
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;  
While thronged the citizens, with terror dumb,  
Whispering with white lips—"The foe ! they come ! they come !" *Childs Harold.*

"Long life to ye'er noble honor ! May ye live all yee'r days, an' nobody kill ye !" exclaimed an old beggar-woman, as she trotted down Sackville-street, after General —, who was reckoned no hero, "Am'int I bound night an' day to pray for ye, since ye saved my son's life at Castlebar?"—"I save him ? I forget the circumstance."—Ogh, but yee'r mimrie's bad, an' more the pity. Why, Ginirel, you ran first, and Pat ran after you !" *Joe Miller.*

Two hours after my father had left the British generals in full carouse, a yeoman brought certain intelligence of Hum-

bert's mid-night march. He had seen him advancing by the lower road, and of course concluded that his approach would be by Foxford. Roused from their drunken slumbers, the commanders would scarcely credit the account given by the loyalist; but my father's conviction of the accuracy of his own information tallied with the yeoman's news, and at last they condescended to believe it possible, that the French were actually on their march to attack the town. A body of carbineers and light cavalry were hurriedly despatched upon the lower road, to observe the expected enemy, while the drums beat, and the troops got under arms.

The scene which the barrack-yard presented was not flattering to the military character of the commanders; there was a general confusion everywhere apparent—an absence of regularity—almost a panic, that would have disgraced a brigade of yeomanry. To judge from the hurried preparations, one would have imagined that an overwhelming force threatened the garrison with destruction, nor ever dreamed that those symptoms of alarm, were occasioned by the advance of an enemy so numerically and physically inferior. But my father was not permitted to make farther observations. An aid-de-camp summoned him to the room where the generals were assembled; and there he found them in council, with their respective staffs, and the officers commanding the artillery and cavalry.

It was quite evident that all were in a different mood, from that in which he found them on his former visit; they were under feelings, in which self-reproach and some alarm might be detected by an acute observer. Never were men worse prepared for calm but determined action; nervous, irritable, and suffering from the effects of recent debauch, they could form no decisive plan, or issue an intelligible order.

"Your information was correct, Major Blake," said General H——, as he offered his hand to my father.

"Had I not been well assured of its accuracy, believe me, sir, I should have been sorry to disturb you so unseasonably as I did," was the reply; "I only have to regret, that my intelligence was not considered last night as important as it proves to be this morning."

"I really cannot yet discover its momentous importance," observed General T——, with a sneer; "the gallant major apprized us of what it was probable Humbert might do, but a worthy yeoman has told us what he has actually done." My father bowed coldly, while the commander proceeded:—

"From his satisfactory report, we have made the necessary arrangements. It is idle to waste more words, and the sooner we move the better. We are perfectly agreed as to our position, General H——?"

"Oh, certainly."

"Might I, without being guilty of presumption, inquire where you intend to oppose the enemy?" said my father to General H——, who seemed anxious to make reparation, for the scepticism with which he had received his tidings on the late visit.

"I cannot consent," replied General T——, "that time should be wasted, while the curiosity of every private gentleman shall be gratified, who expresses a wish to canvass our intended operations."

My father coloured, and to the astonishment of all, sarcastically replied,— "It may be true that my apparent curiosity merits the rebukes, which on more than one occasion, I have received from the gallant general. But, as I suspect that I shall change every part of his very able arrangements, I must take the liberty of repeating the question. I hope for an answer from General H——. To him and none other, do I address myself, and from him alone will I expect a reply. Is yonder gentleman your informant?" and he pointed to a yeoman in attendance.

The general answered in the affirmative, while the aids-de-camp and field-officers closed round, to witness the result of what appeared a very singular scene.

"May I ask you, sir," said Cæsar Blake, as he addressed the loyalist, "*when* you last saw Humbert, and *where* you conceive he may be now?"

"I saw his advanced cavalry at the two-mile-stone, on the Foxford road, and," as he looked at his watch, "he may now be within five or six miles of Castlebar."

"You are pretty correct," said the ex-major. A sneer crossed the features of General T——. "And on what road is he advancing?"

"*What road?*" returned the yeoman with a stare; "what, but the Foxford one? Would you have him swim up the lakes, or fly over the mountains?" General T—— laughed heartily at the brusque reply, in which his staff, as in duty bound, united.

But Cæsar Blake abridged this merriment. "General H——," he said, "I must bear testimony to the truth of this gentleman's statement. I have no doubt whatever that he

saw the French *à la distance*, and at the second mile-stone too ; and, moreover, he has guessed their present distance with amazing accuracy. But as to *where* they are, he knows about as much as the gallant general who is so tickled with his humour."

All started. " And in the devil's name *where are they ?*" exclaimed General H——, " while the countenances of the military conclave expressed unqualified astonishment.

" They are moving by the mountain-road, and over the pass of Barnagee ; unless they met more difficulties than I can anticipate."

" H—ll and fury !" roared General H——, " we have sent our cavalry on the wrong road. Off, Phillips," to an aid-de-camp, " ride for your life and recall them. My dear fellow you are fated to be our guardian angel. Give us the particulars."

" Willingly, sir. But the sooner your infantry commence moving the better. I never saw faster marchers than the blue-coats. Of course you will meet them outside the town ?"

" Assuredly. Go," to an aid-de camp, " see the troops marched off without delay. And now the detail.

" When I left the barrack this morning," continued the ex-major, " I found that to obtain accommodation in the town would be impossible, and rode out to the house of Carrrow Keel. A herdsman, who had been despatched on the preceding evening to ascertain the security of cattle on a distant farm, observed the French advance from a high ground, and gave the alarm. I rode off to reconnoitre and satisfy myself whether his report was correct or not. From the summit of Barnagee, I saw the enemy advancing, and waited there to ascertain their force. The ravine at the bottom of the hill checked the movement of the column. Their cannon stuck fast, and after much labour and delay, they only succeeded in bringing one gun across, and the other was abandoned. They are about a thousand infantry, a troop of hussars, with one curricle gun. And now, gentlemen, you have my news."

" By heaven, you astonish me !" exclaimed General H—— passionately ; " let us mount and be doing. Blake, we owe you much."

" You owe me nothing, sir," said the ex-major haughtily. " I was once the King's soldier, and, however his worthy generals may deem proper to suspect my fidelity, had I one

drop of rebel blood within my veins, I would shed it with as great satisfaction as that of any man," and my father's eye turned on General T——, "no matter what his rank might be, who for a moment dared to question my devoted loyalty."

"Come, come, my dear friend," said General H——, interrupting him, "sincerely I ask your pardon, for not treating your intelligence as it well merited. You shall act as my extra aid-de-camp."

"Excuse me, general; I once held the King's commission, and, if I keep my present sentiments, I shall never again subject myself to the insult I once received, in being obliged to retire on a flimsy pretext. I shall, notwithstanding, do my duty, and serve as a volunteer, until the issue of this day is over. Here is my friend, Captain Shortall; he may require a well-mounted messenger, and I shall attach myself to him."

"Just as you please, sir," replied General H——, in turn offended at my father's rejection of acting on his staff. All left the room to accompany the troops, who were filing quickly off, and marching on the *Gap* road.

Cæsar Blake was speedily alongside the commandant of artillery.

"A pretty piece of work these twaddlers have made of it?" said Captain Shortall; "but for your arrival we should have been in full march for Foxford, and politely vacated this good town for the peaceable occupation of Monsieur Humbert. By heaven! Blake, it is too bad, that fellows are entrusted with commands, who are as incompetent to perform their duties as yonder drum-boy. And that sulky ass T——, how heartily I enjoyed his mortification! Would you believe it, he had the assurance yesterday, to point out some imaginary defect in the limbers of my guns! A fellow that scarcely knows a cascabal from a cartouch-box. Are the French so few, and have they but a single field-piece?"

"I measured them with my eye," returned Cæsar Blake, "while they marched more than a mile; they were in column, and I have seen a strong regiment cover more ground. They had but two guns; one of them they abandoned in a gully, for I saw them attach the horses to the limber of that they disengaged, and with this assistance carry it over the pass."

"We should annihilate them—" said Shortall: "and yet Blake, I have a strange misgiving as to the result. Look at the Longfords there," and he pointed out a militia-regiment

marching immediately in the rear of the guns. "How sulky the scoundrels look! Were they well-affected, they would go into action with other countenances. I trust I may be wrong, but I fear a disastrous issue from drunken generals and disaffected soldiers. But here, as it would appear, is to be our position;" as the leading regiments deployed to the left off the road, adjacent to the village of Roebawn. "Every man to his own trade," continued the captain of artillery. "Ay, let me see"—and he laid a telescope to his eye. "Fifty yards farther, the guns will have yonder height, which the road crosses, within good round-shot range"—and Shortall unlimbered and prepared for action.

The position taken up was badly chosen, and worse defended. Part of the infantry were injudiciously extended, and another was crowded together, and from want of space, unable to deploy. The extreme left was the weakest point, as in front and flank the ground was covered with rocks and thickets, which would favour an enemy's advance, unless occupied with light infantry and sharpshooters. Here, by a singular stupidity, two raw Irish regiments were placed in line, where an able officer would have posted the best troops he could rely upon. As the cavalry came up, they were stationed in the rear of the right and centre; but from the nature of the ground they remained non-combatants.

The whole front of the position was broken, rocky, and difficult, and no place could have been better chosen for the operations of irregular troops. A numerous body of yeomanry and gentlemen volunteers had attached themselves to the garrison of Castlebar. They were capital marksmen, bold, hardy, and enthusiastic, and admirably adapted for every purpose of guerilla warfare; while in line, from want of discipline, they could be of little service. With these skirmishers, the generals might have thickly covered their front and flank. But this advantage was overlooked; and the two arms, in which they were most powerful, and their assailants miserably deficient,—cavalry and sharp-shooters, were never employed.

How truly the drama of life may be termed serio-comic, and how often do the most ridiculous events interrupt its gravest business! The dispositions of the English commandant had been just completed, when, over the rising ground, in front of the guns, a man in a sort of hussar jacket, was seen careering at full speed. His appearance at first was so equivocal, that a score of muskets were levelled, be-

fore he was recognized to be a member of the corps of mounted yeomanry. His dress and hurry bespoke mortal terror; his belts were crossed on the wrong side, and reversing the usual mode of putting a helmet on, he had placed the peak behind, apparently to protect his rear. His own alarm had extended to the steed, which was running his best, while every bound of the horseman's scabbard urged him to increased velocity. On he came, as if determined to charge the guns, till, fortunately, when within twenty yards, an open field-gate allowed the steed to bolt, which he did so suddenly, as to tilt the rider into a deep ditch. The fall, however, was so cleverly accomplished, that this brave auxiliary received no personal damage. "Murder! Murder!" he ejaculated as he gathered himself up, "It's a wonder they did not catch me; there's twenty thousand of them at the bottom of the brae!"

The information of the unlucky chasseur only elicited a roar of laughter; and the holy warrior—for he was a churchman—bustled to the rear as fast as his own portliness and want of wind would permit.

At this moment another horseman crossed the ridge and rode rapidly down the road. "This looks more like business," said Shortall to my father; as the vidette came on at a long trot, and announced the immediate approach of the enemy.

A dead silence was observed—five minutes passed—suddenly the bear-skin caps of the French grenadiers rose over the ridge of the hill, and the head of the column, filling the whole breadth of the road, displayed itself!

The guns had been carefully laid, and Shortall threw his eye along the right-hand piece—"Fire!" he said deliberately—the gun flashed—its sullen boom was repeated by the mountain echoes, as its round-shot pitched with beautiful precision directly into the column, knocking over half a dozen files. Instantly the French fell back over the shelter of the hill to re-form. Short was the respite. The bear-skin caps crossed the ridge again, and again the roar of the gun was heard, and the same effect obliged the column to retire.

Humbert, when he was a second time repulsed, covering the French with a body of insurgents in blue uniforms, pushed them forward, under the leading of a favourite aid-de-camp. The column again appeared, and a third shot falling upon the road, raised a cloud of dust, and in its *ricochet*, ploughed through the dense mass. This was the most fatal

discharge; the rebels broke, ran off tumultuously, and the French fell back to re-form.

Three rounds of a six-pounder had half defeated Humbert, and the battle was nearly won. When the French general had first seen the troops before him, he would have fallen back upon the pass, but retreat with him was ruin. Desperate as his chances were, he determined, at least, to make a movement or two before surrender, and sustain the high character he had acquired in the campaign of Italy. When he decided on making an effort, the beautiful service of the British guns astounded him; his column, arrested by the cannonade, could not even cross the heights: to move down the road, under the fire of these guns, would be hazardous in the extreme; and in close column too, if round-shot distance was destructive, what might not be dreaded when within range of grape and canister? As a last effort, he changed his intended attack altogether; withdrew his column, replaced it with a mob of rebel auxiliaries; and directing one of his staff to lead the luckless rabble on, and thus draw upon them the fire of the guns, under cover of the ditches, he made a rapid flank movement, which his extended order of attack, and the advance of the insurgent mob protected from the artillery, which he had already found so formidable.

At this moment a singular panic seized, or appeared to seize, the suspected regiments, who held the left of the position. They opened their fire at a distance when it was totally inefficient; alarm or disaffection could only cause this strange proceeding: Humbert guessed the true cause, and seized upon that only chance of victory.

Pushing on his voltigeurs at double-quick, he gained the broken ground on the left of the Longford regiment, and succeeded in outflanking it. Then the fortune of the day turned, and a scene, never, thank God! witnessed before or since ensued. The Longfords, without discharging a musket, threw down their firelocks, and went over by companies to the French. The Kerry, next on their right, followed the example, and a general panic spread through the whole line. Then it was that the wretched imbeciles in command were found wanting: enough of well-affected troops remained to remedy the disorder, and redeem the day; but from actual incompetence, the generals could not rally and re-form them. A retreat was hastily commanded; and disgraceful as the order was, it was tenfold aggravated in the execution. The cavalry, who had neither drawn a sword nor discharged a

carbine, instead of retiring leisurely on the town, went off at full trot, disorganizing by their reckless haste a regiment in reserve behind them. The retreat, or, correctly speaking, the rout, became universal; and General —— was seen among the foremost files of the flying horsemen.

Meantime my father and the commandant of the artillery could scarcely believe their senses. A few muskets had been discharged, hardly a man was hit, and the army was deserting the field pellmell. Shortall had held the road against every attempt which the French or their allies had made to advance upon it, and when he noticed the flanking movement, turned his fire upon the left of the enemy; but, seeing the infantry give way, and deserted by the dragoons altogether, he had no alternative left but to retire the guns, or lose them.

"Limber-up," lads!" he said, "and be moving;" and as the drivers attached to the horses, the rebels on the hill, observing the artillery preparing to retreat, poured across the ridge in hundreds. But their tumultuary advance was as promptly interrupted. Shortall unlimbered in a second, and opened with grape upon the rabble; the shot *lanced* the road, and the insurgents, terror-stricken, threw themselves across the ditches, or fled for shelter behind the hill. To the troops, disorganized as they were, a mob-attack might have been ruinous; but this severe check gave the rear regiment a little time, and enabled it to disengage itself.

"Pretty affair this, Blake," said he of the artillery: "no wonder my heart was heavy this morning; and yet, God knows! I little anticipated the fulness of our disgrace. Curse on all fools! give me the Highlanders and yeomanry, my own guns, a fair field, and no general, and I would suffer myself to be blown from a six-pounder, if we did not beat those few French and the horde of banditti that run after them. I hope old Cornwallis, when he does arrive, if that event ever happen, will hang up cowards and rebels indiscriminately. I know at which end he should begin: it is no treason, I hope, to speak of one's superior officer after he has fairly run away."

At this moment an aid-de-camp rode up.

"Pray, Captain Shortall, can you tell me where General —— is, or where I am most likely to fall in with him?"

"As to where he is," replied Shortall dryly, "much, I imagine, depends upon the speed and endurance of his horse. Where he will be found, is a puzzler; I would recommend you to try Athlone."

"Athlone! why, it's eighty miles off."

"And yet, notwithstanding the distance," continued the captain, "I shrewedly suspect, judging from the haste with which he started, he will hardly stop short of that city."

"Well," said the aid-de-camp, "it's rather too far for a morning ride, and I shall content myself with the intelligence of his safety."

"Safe he is," said the commandant of artillery, "from all casualties, save and except those attendant on rough riding and ill-stuffed saddles. But, pray, what is to be done?—and are we to run too?—for the order of the day appears to be 'devil take the hindmost!'"

"It is a deadly shame," observed a yeoman, "to give up the town, when, with a few troops, we could defend it. Could we hold it, Captain Shortall, think you, until the generals will rally some of the runaways?"

"We should in that case, I imagine, hold it to eternity, but we have some honest fellows about us, that appear not to quite relish this new trick of running."

"Let us then," said my father, "make good the bridge, and depend on some chance shamming these refugees to return."

"Be it so," said Shortall, as he halted on the bridge, and unlimbered his cannon, while a few of the Frazer fencibles and Donnegals, with some dozen gentlemen volunteers, who remarked the beautiful service of the artillery, and stuck to it as a last hope, took post beside the guns.

"Come, Cæsar, this is our position for a while; and if the rascals come on stoutly, we'll make some of them pay toll before they cross the river."

Nearly all the troops had cleared the town before this remnant of the royalists occupied the bridge. A few stragglers still came past; but none of them, with one or two exceptions, stopped with the defenders of Castlebar. The last of the refugees ran over, as on the crest of the lofty suburb called Staball, the foremost of the rebels appeared in full pursuit; but one round of grape was sufficient to stop them. Instantly they abandoned the open streets, and endeavoured to penetrate by lanes and by-ways, which would shelter them from the artillery.

"They have not forgotten the lesson we taught them before the rout," said the commandant of the guns, as he remarked the caution of the rebel advance. "Is the river equally shallow all round the town?"

"It is fordable everywhere," replied a private yeoman.

"Then our stay here will be but a short one," was the remark; and the words were indeed soon realized.

A few hussars showed for a moment on the height, and Shortall had just got a gun to bear upon them, when from either side, from yards, houses, and lanes, a close and well-sustained *fusillade* commenced. Two or three matrosses and Frazers dropped, and it was evident that the enemy were in full possession of the suburb. In vain the royalists returned the fire briskly, and the guns, sweeping the heights in front, prevented a Frenchman from advancing; but, under shelter of the houses, the insurgents suffered little loss, while the defenders of the bridge were falling momentarily.

"This will not last," said Shortall to his companion; "all hope of support is over: what is to be done?"

"Retreat instantly!" exclaimed the major, as he pointed to a body of rebels fording the river below and above the bridge simultaneously, while two or three dropping shots were heard directly from the street behind them. "They have got through the gardens, and are already in our rear. Limber up, or the guns are lost!"

And so it was fated. Orders were promptly issued and obeyed, and the horses were being attached, when a small party of French cavalry approached by a cross street, galloped suddenly out in front of the cannon.

"Stand fast, lads!" exclaimed my father: "give them a parting round!"

But while he spoke, a body of insurgents, who, under cover of a garden wall, had crept forward unperceived, threw open a gate beside the bridge, and mixed pellmell with the royalists. A short and bloody contest succeeded; the drivers in the *melée* were knocked from their saddles; and the horses, pricked with pikes and bayonets, became ungovernable, and went off at speed. The guns were lost, but Shortall endeavoured to spike them—the few royalists were forced by numbers over the bridge—and the brave commander hemmed in on every side.

My father, who till now had remained on foot, sprang on his horse, which he had secured in a gateway out of the line of fire. He saw his brave associate, with a few Frazers and artillerymen, making a fierce resistance, and resolved to try and bring him off. Dashing the spurs in his charger, and overturning one or two of the assailants, he reached him for a second; but he was already down, and received his death-wound under the cannon that he had so nobly defended.

Save he could not; but Cæsar Blake avenged him. One ruffian, more remarkable than the rest for his size and ferocity, after giving the fallen officer a mortal stab, shortened his weapon to repeat the thrust. His hat had been struck off in the fray, and he was stooping under my father's sword-arm. With one sweeping cut, the sabre fell upon the ruffian's naked skull, and he fell a dead man on the lifeless body of his victim. Instantly reining round, the major forced his passage through the crowd, and galloped down the street, leaving the hard-contested bridge in possession of the enemy.

The town was filling fast from every side with rebels, and my father's escape was indeed miraculous, as several stragglers fired at him from the houses as he rode off.

And yet this disgraceful day was not without its examples of individual heroism. When Cæsar Blake looked back, the whole suburb was filled with blue uniform and frieze coats. The street before him was tolerably clear, excepting that part immediately in front of the jail, where a score or two of rebels were endeavouring to break in; and where, to judge from a spattering fire, they had met with some effective opposition. My father, galloping up, alarmed the mob, who retired into an adjoining lane; and he then ascertained that the unequal contest had lain between the rebels and a solitary Frazer fencible. The latter had been sentinel at the prison-gate, and, favoured by the high steps and iron palisades, had defended his post most gallantly, and, as a couple of dead rebels told, not without effect.

"Come away, my brave fellow—resistance is madness—the town is all their own. Jump up behind me!" exclaimed the royalist.

"Na, sir," coolly returned the Highlander, "I munna leave my post."

There was no time allowed for farther parley. Short as the delay was, it nearly proved fatal to my father, as the rebels, in increased force, rushed from the lane, and again assailed the prison. One drunken scoundrel, seizing the major's bridle, clung to his horse with such desperate tenacity, as nearly to bring him to his knees, and in another moment he would have been surrounded. Fortunately, the rider had reserved a loaded pistol: quickly, but coolly, he pressed the muzzle against the ruffian's head; the discharge blew it almost to atoms; and the horse, liberated from the dead man's grasp, sprang across the body, and bore the royalist away at speed.

My father looked behind him; the mob were now within the palisades: next moment the sentry-box was hurled down the steps, and a score of sanguinary insurgents appeared pushing with pikes and muskets at some prostrate object. Cæsar Blake easily conjectured that the victim of the rabble, was the gallant and devoted Highlander.

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## CHAPTER X.

### A SKIRMISH.—THE RETURN.

Juan, by some strange chance, which oft divides  
Warrior from warrior in their grim career,  
Like chaste wives from constant husbands' sides,  
Just at the close of the first bridal year,  
By one of those old turns of Fortune's tides,  
Was on a sudden rather puzzled here,  
When, after a good deal of heavy firing,  
He found himself alone, and friends retiring.  
\* \* \* \* \*

'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark  
Our coming, and look brighter when we come.

*Don Juan.*

WHEN my father cleared the town, he found himself upon the same road by which the great mass of the fugitive soldiery had retired. Certain indications of a recent defeat were everywhere visible; broken carriages, scattered arms, disabled horses, and deserted baggage, proclaimed a routed, and not a retreating army. Amid all this abandoned *matériel*, not a wounded man was to be seen. In fact, little loss had been sustained by any but the defenders of the bridge, as scarcely a man had fallen, when a disgraceful flight from an unfought field commenced.

Cæsar Blake felt a momentary indecision whither to direct his course. No military obligation bound him, a free agent, to follow the fortunes of a routed army. Any useless display of loyalty was unnecessary—he had done his duty, and the breath of calumny dared not to attach to his name the imputation of disaffection. There were also private, but powerful calls for his exertions. He had a wife to protect, a household to watch over. His mountain-home, now doubly dear, would, were he absent, be exposed to spoliation by countless vagabonds, whom the insurgent success would encourage to break loose upon the world. His resolution was promptly taken, and

he determined to return to the highlands, and await coming events there.

Well acquainted with the vicinage, he left the high road, and striking into a by-path, directed his route toward the mountains. To cross the country, and avoid the open roads, was desirable, both for safety and expedition. The bogs, generally impassable, even to footmen, from the long continuance of dry weather had become firm and safe; his horse, notwithstanding the morning's fatigue, was still untired; and conjecturing that the victorious rebels would speedily throw themselves on the line of the royalist retreat, in quest of plunder and prisoners, the horseman pushed briskly on to gain a rising ground, where, removed from all pursuit, he might refresh his horse, and observe what passed for miles around.

No rider but one intimately acquainted with the localities of the country, would venture to cross the morass that lay between the town and the hillock where Cæsar Blake established his temporary bivouac. Though within sight of Castlebar, yet was he in perfect security. A field of corn in stacks covered the crest of the rising ground—here he alighted, and unbridling his horse, supplied him plentifully with provender; then, having reloaded his pistols, he stretched himself upon some loose sheaves, and proceeded to refresh himself with a few biscuits, and a well-filled canteen.

The unusual sultriness of the day rendered repose as necessary for the rider as the steed. A breathing space after the excitement and fatigue, mental and bodily, which my father had endured, was now inexpressibly luxurious; and while thus reclining on the hillock, he was fated to witness the closing scene of the disgraceful affair of Castlebar.

The great road, for many miles, was within his view, and he observed a body of dragoons halted on a height, to watch and report the ulterior movements of the enemy. Presently some straggling rebels issued from the town—larger bodies of these irregulars followed—lastly, a small party of French hussars appeared, who, when they perceived the rival cavalry, rode briskly forward, while the dragoons as slowly retired on their approach.

The unexpected success of the morning had stimulated the national audacity of the French to a pitch of daring that no military *esprit* could warrant. Notwithstanding the great disparity in force, at sight of the red-jackets, they spurred forward to attack them. The royalist observed their careless advance, their scanty force, and that they were wholly unsupported.

Falling back behind the crest of the hill, they formed, and unseen by the hussars, coolly awaited their coming up; while the French, never supposing the royalists were halted, pressed their jaded horses on. Nor were they undeceived until they found themselves on the summit of the height, charged and overthrown by a fresh and superior force. Their resistance was short and gallant; they were sabred, and the victors rode off without losing a man. The bodies of the unlucky chasseurs were interred by the peasantry on the spot; and the height on which they perished, bears the appellation of *French Hill*, in memory of this fatal skirmish.

It appeared strange to my father afterward, when he remembered with what indifference he viewed the encounter. He looked on with the coldness of an amateur, without being interested as to which should prove the conquerors. In fact, the pusillanimous behaviour of the carbineers had disgusted their late companion-in-arms, and Cæsar Blake hardly cared whether they repelled the attack, or were defeated; while the reckless gallantry of the fallen Frenchmen excited his admiration, and obtained for them a soldier's sympathy. He watched the brief, but bloody contest to its close, and then mounting his horse directed his course homeward.

He met no interruption; but as he passed through the inhabited country, he was frequently interrogated by the peasantry concerning the result of the engagement, which flying rumours, and a distant cannonade, informed them had been fought. They appeared restless, excited, and irresolute; but this state my father suspected would be of short duration; a general insurrection was inevitable, and he pushed on to reach his home, and prepare for defence or flight, as circumstances might require.

Although impatient to end his journey, the traveller could not effect it before night-fall. Evening found him in the highland valley, and the sun's last light fell upon the eagle's aerie, and sank behind the rocky summit of the mountain, when the rider bathed the limbs of his weary steed in the cool waters of the dark lake.

His heart throbbed with delight as he entered the pass, from which his beloved home would soon be visible. His route through the mountains had been most solitary, and for hours he saw no human face. The moon had not yet risen above the heights which overhung the rocky opening in the hill, and in the gloom he perceived two men directly in the road before him.

"Who goes there?" exclaimed the horseman.

"Holy Saint Patrick ! it's himself," responded a well-known voice ; and next moment Denis O'Brien and an armed attendant rushed forward, seized his hand with that familiarity, which, after perilous events, is held permissible, and both pour-ed forth a thundering jubilation.

"And is it yourself, after all ? and are ye safe and sound?" exclaimed the delighted valet. "Och, murder ! if I knew what to do, since I heard the first whisper of the battle—partly because I hadn't the luck of bein' there, and partly on account of her ladyship. Och ! but the joy will kill her ! Here have I mounted guard, for fear some renegade would slip past, and scare her honour's life out. Arrah, what news, *avourneein?* Is yourself safe, and which side won?"

"Safe I am," replied the horseman, "except a trifling bone-bruising ; and we have been as well beaten as ever a pack of cowardly scoundrels deserved. But how is your lady?"

"Frightened to death, the creature!" replied Mr. O'Brien. "She says she saw something alarming in my face—though, God knows ! whiniver I came in her sight, I strove to laugh, when my heart was brakin' ; and ye would hear me a mile off, whistling like a blackbird, while the tune stuck like a bone in my throat, and nearly choked me. Och ! what a comfort it was to get away, and curse until I felt myself in christian temper. And have the troops retreated, major? Maybe they'll have another shy to-morrow, and yer honour might spare me for a day or two !"

"I'll not belie them, friend Denis," replied the horseman, "by saying they retreated. They ran for it like men ; and if the French can catch the slowest, then are they the smartest fellows that ever bore a firelock."

"Run!" exclaimed the astonished valet ; "may the foul fiend lame them for life, the thieves of the world ! But, Sir, you must not go in, until I make her honour sensible that you are on the march. She's so nervous, the joy would be her her death !" and off went Denis O'Brien, the harbinger of welcome news.

Poor Ellen had been a silent but a sincere mourner. It was impossible that she should not perceive that some unfortunate occurrence either impended or had occurred. Denis was a poor actor ; his outward manifestations of gaiety were forced and unnatural, and ludicrously contrasted with anxieties that, in spite of all his efforts, were too evident to escape remark. The sudden departure and prolonged absence of her husband ; the untimely arrival of the disabled man ; the servants going

about constantly armed ; and the quiet but constant look-out upon the road, changed apprehension to certainty, and heralded to her uneasy mind the coming of disaster. Nor were her fears lessened, on overhearing Denis, who had dressed Conolly's wound, remark that "it was much liker a bullet, than a button hole!"

My father having confided his tried horse to the servant, quietly approached his beautiful and beloved retreat. He ensconced himself within a clump of evergreens, from whence he could see the windows of the favourite sitting-room. It was a lovely and a peaceful scene. The moonbeams were dancing merrily on the little lake, while, in varied shadowing, her fitful light appeared and disappeared over the mountain ridges. But the returning soldier had no eyes for gazing on what would form a painter's study. One object engrossed his sight and filled his heart, and that was his own gentle Ellen who was standing in melancholy musing at the open casement. At this moment, Denis O'Brien was seen advancing.

"Well, Denis," said a sweet and melancholy voice, that thrilled through the listener's heart, "have you brought any tidings?"

"Arrah, the devil a news that's bad, any how, my lady. The master will be here to-morrow *for sartein*," replied the valet.

"Pshaw! you told me he would be here this evening. I fear you are but amusing me, and have heard no intelligence."

"By this book ! and Mr. O'Brien tapped the barrel of the gun he carried on the hollow of his arm, "I was talking to a man that parted from his honour within this half hour. That is—I mane—Arrah ! my lady, don't take a body up so quick. Says the chap to me, 'Denis, you know you may put depindince in what I tell ye ; the master's coming home, as fast as Splinterbar can carry him : and more betoken,' says he, 'in the battle he didn't get a scratch.' "

"The battle! what battle?"

"Arrah!—sorra battle, good or bad ; but the French, you know—"

"What! French?"

"Death an nouns! don't be flustering yerself, my lady. Arrah! what put the French in my head? It's them rebels, the curse of Cromwell on them!"

"Rebels—French—the battle!"

My father had received sufficient evidence touching Denis's abilities as an ambassador, to induce him to supersede the va-

let as soon as possible. Stealing round the shrubbery, he entered the house without observation, and on tiptoe approached my mother at the window.

"Denis," she said, "you have made me very wretched. There is some mystery—some concealment. Is he well? is he coming? When? where? Oh! speak man! anything will be preferable to this uncertainty."

A gentle step was heard stealing across the carpet,—a soft voice whispered something in her ear—she turned quickly, uttered a shriek of delight, and sprang into the extended arms of the traveller. Caesar! my own, my darling husband! are you come safely back?"

"Why, upon my soul! he is; and so I would have made ye sensible, if your ladyship had but patience. And now, the sooner the master gets his supper the better; for nothing, my lady, gives a man his appetite, like a long ride or a good beating."

A month passed, and the rebellion was suppressed. Humbert held possession of Castlebar, until a combined movement of twenty thousand men, under the Marquis Cornwallis, obliged him to leave the town. After some able movements, and a great deal of severe marching, a spirited affair with the Limerick regiment at Colooney, brought the campaign to a close. The French surrendered prisoners of war; and the miserable wretches who accompanied them, were hanged or shot, according to the fancy of the general, or as either was most convenient.

In their beautiful retreat my parents remained undisturbed. Conolly recovered, and embarking in a smuggler, escaped to Holland, and thus avoided the fate that other leaders of the insurgents underwent.

If my father had any wish to follow the fortunes of the royalists during the short and sanguinary campaign that succeeded the rout of Castlebar, the interesting situation of his lady made his sojourn in the mountain-lodge indispensable, for an heir was promised. Without his wife's knowledge, he apprised her father of the circumstance, and made a strong appeal to him for forgiveness. It was unsuccessful; a cold and heartless answer was returned, that held out no hope of pardon, or betrayed any symptom of returning regard. He spoke of her as of one dead; and alluding to her elopement, bitterly upbraided my father with her loss—

"You stole her from me; like a thief you stole her  
At dead of night!"

Of course, the major concealed this unfortunate correspondence from his lady, but he redoubled his attentions, and Ellen was truly happy. Removed from the world, neither of my parents appeared to have a wish ungratified; and never were two hearts more tenderly united than those of the ex-major and the fair runaway.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### A STORM—AN ESCAPE—CONFESIONS OF A FUGITIVE.

Away ! away ! 'and on we dash !  
Torrents less rapid and less rash.

*Mazepa.*

What dost thou require ?  
Rest, and a guide, and food, and fire.

*Scott.*

Short was the course his restlessness had run,  
But long enough to leave him quite undone.

*Lara.*

It was on the third evening after the French had surrendered at Ballinamuck, that an incident occurred, which, from the confusion of the times, created no small alarm in the isolated household of Cæsar Blake.

The day was unusually sultry ; any exertion out of doors was disagreeable and oppressive ; the air felt like breathings from a furnace ; dark clouds, surcharged with rain, canopied every hill-top ; while distant mutterings from the ocean told that a tempest was on the wing. Presently, with one wild crash, the storm burst above the lodge, and a volume of water deluged the parched earth. Next minute, every rill and water-course was filled ; and, tumbling from the heights, a hundred streams hid themselves in the dark bosom of Glen-cullen.

How grand an Alpine storm appears, when witnessed from a safe and sheltered spot ! The roar of waters ; the pealing of Heaven's artillery ; flash succeeding flash, gleaming over highland steep, or brightening the swollen surface of the river —till, spent by its own fury, the blaze is seen no more, and the thunder dies upon the ear in low and distant mutterings.

Thus passed the storm, leaving a cloudless sky behind ; and

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a cooler and lovelier evening never gladdened a mountain solitude.

My mother was delighted, when her liege lord invited her to accompany him on an excursion up the lake; she to sketch mountain-scenery, while he amused himself with angling. The air was balmy and delicious, Nature felt refreshed, the trouts sprang merrily, the coots sported gaily in the reeds, while the wild-duck piloted her infant brood to their island retreat, when plashing oars apprised her of man's approach. The sun was nearly setting, and produced among the broken hill-tops, a splendid alternation of lights and shadows.

Just then, while my mother directed her husband's eyes to the picturesque appearance of a fissure in a range of heights, whose bases touched the margin of the water, a human figure rushed through the pass at headlong speed, and hurried down the steep declivity. The cause was not long concealed; several soldiers crossed the hill, and discharged their muskets at the fugitive, who, apparently uninjured by the fire, outstripped his followers easily, and held on a course directly for the narrow union of the lakes, where my father's boat was laid upon her oars.

This unexpected chase produced an unexpected sensation; pencil and fishing-rod were abandoned; my father watched the pursuit with excited interest, and my mother with nervous apprehension.

On came the fugitive! He paused for a moment on a rising ground beside the lake, looked back at his pursuers, first levelled the gun he carried at the foremost, but changing his determination, he aimed at the second steadily; he fell—while, flinging his musket away, the runaway bounded across the hillock, leaped into the lake, buffeted the water gallantly, and pressed for the other shore.

My father's boat lay directly in his course, but owing to the shelter of a ready islet, this circumstance escaped the notice of the fugitive. Too late he perceived it, and for a second paused from exertion; then, with a sudden resolution, stretched boldly out again. When he came within an oar's length, he laid his hand upon the blade, which a rower dropped on the surface to support him, and in a voice that told how violent his efforts at escape had been, he said,

“ You will not stop an unfortunate man, major? ” ;

“ Who are you? ” asked my father.

“ A rebel? ” was the bold reply.

“ You know me, it would seem.”

"Ay, that I do; will you stop me?"

"I am no bloodhound," said Cæsar Blake; "push on, the Highlanders are on the beach. Keep the boat between you and them, for they are within good musket-range, and have reloaded."

"Cæsar Blake, I owe you a life, I [may pay ye someway yet—God Almighty bless you, lady"—for my mother had earnestly joined the fugitive in his petition,—"I can only pray for you. Will you, major, give me a moment's breathing time, before you ferry yon blood-hounds over?"

"I ferry them over! No—no.—It would be a poor exploit to crush a hunted enemy. Had I met you at Castlebar—"

"And so you did," returned the fugitive. "Ay, and the gun that did its business to the last, missed fire upon the bridge."

My mother shuddered. "Off!" cried the major, "and if all other places fail, at twilight you may find a crust at the lodge. But, hark! they halloo from the shore; and now, God speed thee, friend!"

"Amen!" responded the runaway, as he dropped the oar, and with renewed vigour breasted the waters gallantly—he gained in a minute the opposite shore, and plunging into the reeds, disappeared in the broken ground that skirted that part of Glencullen.

Perceiving that the rebel had landed, my father directed his boatmen to pull in. The Highlanders, three in number, had remarked the escape of the fugitive, and, irritated at the fall of their companion, whose leg had been broken by the outlaw's shot, hallooed more furiously, while more than once they threatened to fire on the boat.

"Why the de'il did ye na pull in, nor stop the villain in the water?" was the rough address of the corporal, as my father stepped ashore.

The major drew himself up and haughtily replied, "Because I do not attend to the orders of such fellows."

"Fellows!" screamed the Highlander; "Ken ye, friend, who we be?"

"I may guess possibly. Pray *who* are you?"

"Wha am I?" returned the corporal, swelling with rage; "are ye blind? Know ye the colour of this coat, and ask sic silly questions. De'il ha' me, gin I would mind much sticcin the bagnet in ye!"

"If you did," said the master of the boatmen, "you would never draw another, Sawney." My mother grew pale as she

watched the flashing eyes of the affronted Celt. "Fear nothing, Ellen, the fellows do not know me. Scoundrel! I am your superior officer, and your insolence would fully warrant my leaving you to your fate. Look up! see you any thing behind that distant hillock?"

The soldier turned round—his companions also looked attentively. The colour left their cheeks, their hands trembled; for at least three-score armed peasants were regularly extending themselves between the Highlanders and the hills, making retreat impossible, while to resist was madness.

"Scoundrel!" said my father, "because I would not strike a drowning wretch, you would have fired at an innocent female, and assassinated the king's officer. What do you suppose your life is worth?"

"Little I suspect," replied the Highlander doggedly; but at all events, I wun'na part with it chape. Look to your primings, lads; at least, we'll die like sodgers!"

"Gallantly spoken!" exclaimed Caesar Blake; "that speech redeems your rashness. Die you shall not, nor shall insult or injury befall a comrade in these hills. Stand fast—order arms!"

The tone of voice in a moment told that the person who gave it was no pretender.

"We are at your command," said the Celt; "Lord sees, we could na guess that we should find an officer in these bleak mountains."

"'Twas well you did, or you were but lost men. Fear nothing. Stay, Ellen, here—I leave you only for a few minutes."

"No, no, dear Caesar! You must not venture among these wild men."

My father smiled. "I am safe, my pretty one, not a hand there will injure me;" and leaving the shore, he advanced to meet the armed body, who were surrounding the devoted Highlanders, with a caution and regularity that betokened their determination to prevent all chances of escape.

When the major was seen approaching, the leader of the party came forward.

"Prendergast! is it possible? You, who were hitherto so remarkable for good conduct in very turbulent times, are you going to turn rebel now, and attack the king's troops?"

"No, major," said the peasant, "you will allow that I have been a quiet and a peaceable man. But that poor fellow whom you saw driven to the lake, came a stranger, under

trust, to my house for shelter. There's money on his head, I fancy, but I would rather die than see him taken off and hanged."

"He is safe for the present," replied my father. "Had I wished him harm, a blow from the oar would have saved all farther trouble. I saved *him*, and I wish to save *you*. If you molest those soldiers, have you calculated what the consequences will be? Your houses will be burned, your property pillaged, yourselves hunted, hanged, or driven out upon the world, and your families beggared and undone."

"His honour's right," exclaimed several voices. "Well, major, and what would you have us do?"

"Why, nothing, my good friends, but to just go quietly home; and the sooner pike and musket are again put in their hiding-places, the better. Where are the rest of the Highlanders?"

"Searching the next village for a priest from Costello, who was out, God pity him!" returned the leader.

"I don't pity him," rejoined my father; "had he attended to his duties, and discouraged rebellion among his flock, instead of exciting them to insurrection by his own pernicious example, many a wretch would escape the gallows who may well curse him. Go, tell the soldiers that their companions are safe, and that the wounded man shall be attended to; get a door\* and carry him with care to the lodge."

"Shah, Shah,—yes, yes," returned a dozen voices, now as solicitous to perform any act of kindness to the soldiers, as five minutes ago they were burning to assail them. Such is the versatile disposition of a people, whose passions have made them playthings for knaves, and scoundrels to employ, and whose alternations from right to wrong are variable as the sunshine of "an April morn!"

\* As the doors in an Irish cottage are suspended upon hooks, they are easily removable, and contrived to discharge more than a "double debt." Laid across a tub, the door becomes *locum tenens* for the table—or laid upon the floor, wonderfully assists the saltations of a jig-dancer.

Many a cabin perforated with two orifices, only possesses a single door. Of course, it is applied to stop the *weather* opening in the wall, while the *lee* one must be contented with an old mat, a bunch of heather, a tattered creel, or any of "the thousand and one" shifts, which Irish ingenuity could alone devise. In case of accidents, the door becomes a litter for the sufferer, or a bier for the defunct. Hence, gentlemen who shuffle off this mortal coil in a steeple chase, or on the field of honour, are thus transported to a convenient place to "lie in state." From this it has become common to prophesy of a drunkard, a duellist, or a breakneck rider, that "on some blessed morning, he'll come home upon a *door!*"

Half a dozen sturdy peasants had immediately set off to assist the maimed Highlander, while the others, in obedience to my father's advice, prepared to return to their village. They were moving, when a whispering took place, and the peasant who seemed to influence their actions, addressed the major, who was retiring to his boat.

"The boys hope, major dear, that you won't mention anything of this to the 'Right Hanarable.'"

My father smiled. "Fear nothing from me, lads. Denis and I have different fancies as to finishing people; he likes the rope, I prefer the musket. He is pretty well supplied with turncoats and informers, without requiring my services; and, to say the truth, even were there a vacancy on his staff, I apprehend that I have neither favour in his sight, nor abilities in his favourite line of business, to obtain the appointment. And now, if you have no ambition to 'spoil a market,'\* the sooner you are off the better."

With unfeigned pleasure, the expectant group upon the shore observed the peasantry retire, and my father return—all were speedily embarked, and the boat pulled rapidly to the lodge. The soldiers felt as men do, when suddenly delivered from impending death, while my mother's blanched cheeks showed that she had not nerve to witness scenes where men's lives hung upon hair-breadth accidents—nor had her ears become sufficiently "Irish," to listen unmoved to the whistle of a musket-ball.

During the short passage down the lake, the Highland corporal explained the cause of this unexpected, and nearly disastrous expedition. A military detachment had been sent from Castlebar to occupy the village of Louisburgh, as it was contiguous to the mountains, where it was well known many of the rebels had concealed themselves. Two or three of the chief delinquents were especially pointed out, and a reward offered for their apprehension. In this list, *the fugitive* was conspicuous. As it turned out, he was not only in the neighbourhood, but appeared determined that on this point there should be no doubt whatever; for while the military were in

\* Not a hundred years have passed, since an Irish judge always made it a point to hang his men upon the market-day. The advantages were manifold. The execution was witnessed by thousands, who otherwise would have found some inconvenience in attending. The more hanging matches, the less the thing was regarded. People became reconciled to the rope, and when in good time their own turn came, they proved the benefit of example,—“died game, and lived in story.”

active pursuit of him among the hills, he entered the village in their absence, tore down the paper that proclaimed him, and affixed it to the mill-door, amused himself and sundry spectators, by *riddling* it with bullets. This audacious insult was too much for Highland blood to tolerate. Private information denounced the place he harboured; the village was surrounded, and favoured by accidental circumstances, the daring outlaw was nearly surprised asleep. He had only time to partially dress, seize his gun, and jump from a window. The military were all around; and though fired at within pistol-range, to the surprise of all, he managed to escape.

It was not long before the rest of the Highlanders, guided by a peasant, joined their comrades; the disabled soldier was carefully carried in, and from the attention and hospitality bestowed upon the wounded and the weary, the party left the lodge next morning with very different sentiments toward Cæsar Blake than the stormy meeting on the shores of the lake foreboded.

It was nearly midnight; the house was quiet; for the tired soldiery, after ample refreshment and a free carouse, were buried in profound repose. My father had taken his rounds for the last time, to ascertain that all was secure, and was entering the hall, when from a clump of low shrubs, scarcely high enough to conceal a dog, a human voice pronounced his name in tones so low as to be almost inaudible. The major started, "Is there any body there?" he exclaimed, "Speak!"

"It is I," replied the same low voice, "I, the runaway!"

"Hush!" said my father, "there are enemies in the house."

"I know it," replied the voice from the shrubbery; "but I watched them to their quarters, and heard their heavy breathing outside the door. They are asleep."

"Are you long here?"

"I am; I would have tapped upon the window, but feared, from the lateness of the hour, that the lady might be alarmed."

"You did well; remain there for a minute—I shall not be long absent."

Cæsar Blake briefly apprised his wife of the unexpected visit, and having closed the curtains of the drawing-room, and ascertained that no person was in the way to observe the stranger's entrance, he brought in the weary fugitive.

Had not my mother been prepared for this midnight interview, the appearance of the late guest might have startled one of stronger nerves. Surprised, and driven from his hiding-place, half-dressed, his shirt was torn in a struggle—for a

Highlander had actually seized him, and a slight flesh-wound had discoloured it with blood. After the violent exertions of escaping, the wet clothes and chilling dew had benumbed his stiffened limbs; his teeth chattered; his hands shook; and his whole look bespoke cold, want and weariness.

Yet the outlaw's spirit was unsubdued. He stood at the extremity of the apartment, and when my father filled a glass with brandy, and beckoned him to approach the table, he muttered something about "wet clothes" and "the lady's presence," as if, notwithstanding the extent of his suffering, his pride refused to permit a female eye to dwell upon his wretchedness.

"Come, my poor fellow; drink—that brandy will be serviceable; you must be chilled almost to death."

The outlaw took the glass, and respectfully drank to his host and the lady.

"Ay, major, that is indeed a cordial," said the fugitive; "my heart warms anew, and the blood flows again through my veins!"

"I thought so," said the major; "and now I will entrust you to one who will supply your supper, and furnish you with a bed. In the morning we will talk farther."

"Before morning," he replied, "I shall be many a mile from this."

"Is it so? Come, then, as time presses, what are your wants? speak boldly."

"Food," returned the outlaw, "clothing, and a short rest."

"All these shall be yours—" and my father rang the bell. Denis O'Brien answered it, and to him the fugitive was entrusted, with all necessary directions for attending to his safety and his wants.

This incident changed the major's purpose of retiring to bed. He wished to speak to the fugitive again, for the allusion to the affair of Castlebar had awakened his curiosity. A different feeling actuated my mother. In the stranger's looks there was something to interest, and much to alarm. She was anxious to see one whom she half feared and compassionated; and it is inconceivable how frequently in life these conflicting sentiments are found.

The delay was short. An hour had scarcely elapsed, when the stranger again presented himself. Denis had made a striking change in the outward man, by equipping him in a sporting dress of his master, and he looked a different being.

The wanderer had scarcely reached manhood. Buoyant and vigorous as his youthful figure seemed, he was far from

having achieved the gigantic strength, which his powerful frame promised to possess when it had matured. His face was handsome; the eye was dark, the teeth regular, and the mouth well-formed—and yet the expression was, on the whole, unfavourable. Every line of that handsome countenance betrayed the workings of stormy and ungovernable passions, easy to excite, and difficult to allay. Whether it was that a bolder spirit had revived with returning vigour, or that he felt himself no longer the abject fugitive, as when he crawled from his concealment, subdued by fatigue and paralyzed by cold, he advanced boldly to his benefactors; and when he acknowledged the kindly reception he had gotten in his hour of need, the language in which he expressed his gratitude, was very different from what an ordinary peasant would employ.

"Have you been sufficiently refreshed and rested?" said the major.

"I have, indeed," returned the fugitive, "been freely welcomed, and generously supplied with all I wished or wanted. I have nothing to ask, but that you will receive an outcast's blessing, and believe that James Murphy will never forget this night to you and yours. Lady, we may not meet again," for my mother had risen to leave the room, "may you never require the only service that I could offer; but, 'tis a strange world, and should you, may I be near to render it."

"And where do you purpose going?" said the major, as the door closed.

"To Connemara," replied the fugitive, "and join some fellows as wild and wretched as myself."

"Nay," said the major, "why persevere in crime, and why add fuel to the fire? The severity of government will in time relax: remain quiet, and you may yet be happy; you are young."

"Young I am," replied the fugitive; "I have not reckoned twenty summers, and yet am I a wanderer, a cast-away, beyond recovery or redemption!"

"Pshaw, nonsense! The beard is not curled on your chin; what can you have done to render your honest chances of life so desperate? Attend to me: live quietly, Murphy; remain for a while in retirement. I am not, God knows! over wealthy—but still I can spare you enough to prevent any necessity on your part for taking to desperate means; and when a few months blow over, I will intercede and gain your pardon."

"Caesar Blake," said the outlaw, "we are alone. I owed you a life; I owe you for this welcome succour, without which

the life you spared would be an useless gift. But your intended kindness would be idle. Did I escape the Mall\* in Castlebar, what would save me from the gallows in Clonmel?"

"I hardly understand you," said my father.

"Listen, then;" and the fugitive approached my father closely: "mine is as wild a tale as any you may have yet heard. My father was but a peasant"—He paused. "Hang it! one will feel those weaknesses! May I, under favour, trespass on your hospitality?" The major bowed; and the outlaw filled a goblet of port-wine, drank it, and continued. "My father was a peasant, but he was a wealthy one. I was his only child; his ambition was to make me a priest, and he gave me a suitable education. I learned Latin freely; I loved books—read ardently, and soon discovered that I was not formed for a churchman. The calmness of the cloister was unsuited to a spirit wild as mine—I felt small ambition to fill a confessional, and listen to man's deceit and woman's frailty. Well, they found out that the church would not in me receive an ornament; and they devoted me to physic, and bound me to an apothecary in Longford. Alas! I had no fancy for dispensing drugs; physic was as little to my taste as divinity; I tired of of any thing like thralldom, and only waited for a decent apology to kick the shackles off. For that I did not tarry long, as my master saved me all trouble by discarding me. The truth must out: his daughter was seventeen and his wife seven-and-thirty; both favoured me with their friendship, and I preferred the young one's. We were indiscreet; mamma was on the watch; our affair was discovered, denounced, and, what I sighed for most, the honest apothecary gave me—the door and my indentures.

"After this exploit, it was useless to return home. The second professional failure irritated my poor father; he affected to be displeased, and I determined to be independent. I was just eighteen the morning I wandered off, neither knowing nor caring which way I headed.

"In the course of a week's rambling, I found myself near a relative of my mother's, who was gamekeeper to Lord —, and I thought I might as well visit him. I did so, and was hospitably received. He was getting old, had an infirm ankle, and, having discovered that I was a better shot than himself, persuaded me to become, for the present, his assistant, with a promise that in time I should succeed him. It was a life that

\* This was a favourite hanging-place during, and after the rebellion.

s suited me well ; I followed my own fancy—killed game, broke dogs, made love, sang, danced, hurled, and was happy.

“ This was but a fleeting hour ; a gleam of sunshine before a thunder-storm.” The outlaw stopped : he was for a moment agitated ; but the feeling that caused it was quickly subdued, and he thus continued :—“ My relative had an only daughter : she was about my own age, and, handsome as many of the southern peasants are, I never saw one who could compare with Rose Dwyer. Residing beneath the same roof, and constantly together, is it surprising that we loved ? Mine was a passion that death alone could end—hers was, unfortunately, a transitory fancy.

“ Christmas came : the castle was filled with company ; the heir had completed his minority, and fêtes and rejoicings celebrated that great event. He returned from Oxford, and it was a fatal return for both him and me. He was a fine-looking young man, warm-hearted, affable, a sportsman, and I liked him. From the cradle he had been a spoiled child ; from a boy his own master : he had been fashionably educated, and, of course, was fashionably profligate. From the moment he saw Rose Dwyer he became fascinated with her beauty. I was not blind ; but had I not observed it, his passion would have been no secret ; for in the familiarity of shooting condescension, he more than hinted that the woman I designed to be a wife, he intended to make a mistress.

“ It is useless to be particular. He found agents enough to assist in corrupting innocence ; and every vulnerable point in Rose’s character was vigorously assailed, and all means used to undermine her virtue. Presents and flattery were lavishly employed ; yet, had I remained, I believe Rose would have resisted all solicitation ; and, instead of becoming the plaything of a vicious peer, lived in honourable honesty the wife of the peasant’s son.

“ The secret was not long undiscovered as to how far my presence had rendered Lord William’s plans abortive, and caused his overtures to be rejected. To win Rose, I must be removed. The young lord cared for me ; but I was an obstacle to the attainment of a fancy—a thorn in his path of pleasure, and I must in some way be got rid of.

“ This was rather difficult ; I was a favourite with the old earl ; I had committed no fault ; and to part with me, without a reason, was impossible. But removed I must be, and that by under-hand contrivances.

“ Where the will exists, opportunity is seldom wanting long.

It happened that I was sent by the keeper to the next town, to sell some deer and rabbit skins. A false villain, a creature of Lord William, and one who cordially hated me for the favour I held in the sight of the old earl, accompanied me. We disposed of the skins, and went to a public-house to refresh ourselves—I was an unsuspecting fool, and he an artful scoundrel. He managed to intoxicate me ; bribed a crimp, brought him in, slipped a shilling into my pocket, swore I had been regularly enlisted, and, before I was sufficiently sobered to comprehend their villainy, I was marched off with some other wretches under a military guard, conveyed to Cork, and shipped directly off to Bristol.

"I detain you, major ; but I will hurry to the close. With my feelings I will not trouble you. Imagine a caged tiger, who pants to spring upon his keeper, but finds the bars prevent it. I knew at once the villainy practised upon me ; I guessed the ruin preparing for another. The scheme was clear ; and I swore, if I could not mar, I would revenge it deeply,

"My resolution, of course' was to desert from the regiment, and return to Ireland.

"Passion overcame prudence. I made the attempt too rashly ; was betrayed, overpowered, retaken, and brought back a prisoner, after having wounded four soldiers engaged in securing me.

"Well, the result was—" The fugitive paused, grew pale as death, his eyes glared, his brows united. "Come, this is weakness," he gasped out. "You, a soldier, will guess the consequence—*the halberts!* Major—ay, to the halberts was I doomed ! I was tied up before a thousand lookers-on, and received five hundred lashes, honestly counted and vigorously inflicted. They excoriated my back, but they could not break my spirit. I placed a musket-bullet between my teeth, and never gratified my tormentors with a groan !

"Did a failure make me renounce my resolution ? Oh no ! Had they cut a limb off, I would have dragged the mutilated carcass to the place where I had been injured and disgraced, and I would have had revenge.

"Accident, happily assisted me to effect my escape from Bristol. The first morning I crawled from the hospital, I met an Irish sailor in the street. I heard him speak in my native language ; I followed him, told him how I had been kidnaped, and implored him to assist me in returning. He did so ; privately supplied me with jacket and trowsers, smuggled me on board, concealed me in the hold, and divided his grub and

grog as liberally as if I had been a brother; and while my tender-hearted judges believed me, for weeks to come, the tenant of an hospital, I was hurrying back—too late to save Rose Dwyer from disgrace, but not too late to exact a desperate revenge.

“I did not delay an hour in Waterford, but started for Oak Wood, the earl’s residence. I reached the termination of my journey after dark, and sought the dwelling of a park-keeper, who owed me some obligations, and mortally hated Halligan, the scoundrel who had betrayed me to the crimp. I was kindly welcomed; my back dressed, and I was accommodated with everything I needed. To my repeated inquiries I received reluctant answers. My worst fears were confirmed—Rose Dwyer had fallen!

“Wearied as I was I tossed upon a restless bed—hell burned in my breast—my brain was fired—my blood felt like molten lead—and blood alone could calm the demon spirit that filled my tortured bosom.

“The next day passed, although I thought it endless. I had learned all the particulars of the seduction of the woman idolized. Worthless as she was, I did not curse her; and I thought of her fall, more in sorrow, than in anger.

“She was now residing in a beautiful cottage in a remote part of the domain, Halligan and his wife her sole companions. The old lord was willingly blind to the affair, which the younger one took no pains in concealing. He spared no expense in decking out his victim, drove her openly about, and she appeared, as they told me, insensible to her disgrace, and displayed in public her ill-acquired finery—the wages of guilt and shame.

“Night came at last—never did expecting lover sigh for it more ardently than I. None knew every coppice and skirting in the park better, and, by a devious path through clumps and underwood, I reached unseen the cottage of my worthless love.

“It was well lighted, but the closed curtains prevented me from observing those within. I waited two long, long hours. There was occasionally noise, and mirth, and bustle. I heard Rose laugh joyously. Poor wretch! little did she foresee how soon that light laugh would turn to tears and wailing.

“I stood in a belt of evergreens that shut out the cottage from the view of the road, and the door was within a few paces. Presently I heard a horse-tramp in the rear; and Halligan came round with a lantern in his hand, leading Lord William’s favourite pony. My hand crept to my bosom, where

my pistols were concealed, when I saw the villainous agent of all my misery. But the door, opened, and Rose, splendidly dressed, stood beside her seducer. She held a lighted candle, and when I think how like an angel she looked, my brain yet burns. ‘Farewell,’ she said, ‘farewell, my William.’ *My William!* By Heaven! major, that phrase agonized my soul more than five hundred stripes had tortured my body. ‘And shall I ride the sorrel mare to-morrow?’ He whispered something in her ear; she blushed, smiled, turned her rosy lips to his, and kissed him ardently. I could see no more. The foul fiend’s breast never felt more hellishly than mine. I levelled a pistol, drew the trigger, and next moment Lord William was in eternity—and on the bosom of the woman he had ruined, the last sigh of the seducer escaped.

“I did not conceal myself; I strode from my ambush; I stood over my fallen rival, while Rose, uttering piercing shrieks, dropped in convulsions on the lifeless body of her noble paramour. I was cool, unmoved; ay, more collected than while I now relate the tale. Halligan had fled. I seized the bridle of Lord William’s pony, mounted, rode off to the mountains, and long before morning was safe from pursuit.

“My story is nearly ended. The young lord’s murderer was generally imputed to political causes, and a thousand pounds were offered for the apprehension of the assassin. I eluded all attempts to take me, headed a body of insurgents, and, finally, joined the French.”

“What became of the wretched cause of all this blood and misery?” said the host.

“Poor girl! I cannot but pity her still. The old earl was distracted, and attributed the loss of his son to the fatal connexion he had formed. Rose was disgracefully turned out of her gay residence. The villain Halligan plundered her of all her ill-acquired valuables, for she had none to befriend or shelter her. She was loathed, execrated, persecuted—and driven desperate, she died by her own hand; her uncoffined remains were cast into a hole in the high-road; and a common grave refused to the remains of her, who had once been so lovely—and once so ardently beloved!

“I have done, major; the rest is of no moment. You have heard, what no human ear shall ever hear, ‘*the fugitive’s Confession*.’ You have repaid evil with good. I assailed you on the bridge of Castlebar; and twice, the gun that never failed before, was snapped at you ineffectually, within a dozen paces. Farewell, major; the prayer of such a wretch

as I would not be heard; but may you be happy! and when you hear Murphy 'the murderer' cursed—remember the wrongs that roused him—the deliberate villainy that drew down his just vengeance!"

He caught my father's hand, wrung it with a wild grasp, rushed from the room, and was hidden in the plantations.

While the major was still pondering over the tale of blood, Denis O'Brien cautiously peeped into the apartment.

"Arrah! and are ye alone? Is he gone, the devil?"

"Devil, you may well term him: and yet that wretch, but for the crimes of others, might not have been more criminal than his fellow men. I hope you took care of him Denis?"

"Faith! and that I did," replied the valet; mate and drink he had *galore*, and for-by a good suit of clothes, I gave him the owld carbine, just to keep in his hand by way of company, until he can stale a better gun."

"There you did wrong," said the master; "we are bound to give food and shelter to the wretched—but to arm the king's enemy! it was wrong, Denis."

"Why then, and may be it was," said Mr. O'Brien, "and I niver thought of that, good or bad. But when the cratur told me he was goin' into Connemara, to join the biggest thieves under the canopy,\* why, it would be worse than murder to let him among them without something in his fist. They say, that a cat in hell without claws has no chance at all, at all; and sure Connemara's worse, and that everybody allows."

Denis' logic was unanswerable, and my father said no more, but retired to his chamber.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PROMOTION—A CHRISTENING.

What have we  
Done, that we must be victims for a deed  
Before our birth ?

*Cain.*

Al Hassan's brow  
Is brightened with unusual joy—  
What mighty mischief glads him now,  
Who never smiles but to destroy?—*MOORE.*

AUTUMN passed, the trees were in the sear and yellow leaf, and frequent gales from the stormy west swept their falling

\* A Connaught abbreviation for "under the canopy of heaven."

honours along the valley, as if to intimate that the dreary season of the "dying year" was come. Other indications of icy winter were frequent. The woodcock sprang from the evergreens, the snow-birds flocked upon the sand-hills, snipes and field-fares arrived in numbers, and wild geese and barnacles were nightly heard in their passage to the feeding-grounds, as they directed their clamorous flight from the lake to the fens.

The time, indeed, had come when the lodge must be exchanged for the town, and that, too, for other causes than inclemency of weather. The country was disturbed by marauders; and the mountain-districts infested by proclaimed rebels, or deserters from the king's troops; who, rendered desperate when the French surrendered, scattered over the province, to skreen themselves from the merited vengeance which their treachery and disaffection had incurred. Connemara; wild, lawless, and almost without the pale of civilization, was a safe and favourite haunt for all malefactors; and its proximity to the lodge, greatly increased the insecurity of the latter. My mother's approaching accouchement made a town residence indispensable. A house was accordingly engaged in Castlebar —and leaving Denis O'Brien in charge of the garrison, Cæsar Blake and his lady bade, as they believed, a temporary farewell to their mountain-home. But it proved to be an eternal one!

It was on a fine November day that they left the highlands. The sun was sparkling on the summits of the hills, which a recent snow-shower had slightly sprinkled. The stream from the lake had changed its character, and, swollen by autumnal floods, appeared now a goodly river. Though the heath was darkened, and the trees were leafless, there was still a quiet and romantic beauty in this lonely landscape, which winter could not destroy. To my mother, her mountain-home appeared lovelier than ever, probably because she felt a presentiment that she was leaving it for ever.

While she was gazing on hill and lake and river, with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret, my father's quick eye detected the advance of a military rider. The sunbeams *glinted* from his helmet and steel scabbard, and announced him to be an orderly dragoon. On the approach of the carriage, the horseman pulled up, and taking a packet from his sabretash, delivered it to the major. Cæsar Blake broke the seal; the despatch merely contained a letter of congratulation from the commanding officer at Castlebar, and enclosed a newspaper. My father turned to the gazette; there his name appeared as

promoted to a lieutenant-colonelcy, with an appointment to the 5th regiment, then in India, but under orders for Europe. His gallantry at Castlebar, it appeared, had not been overlooked. General H—— made honourable mention of his services; and in consequence, he was restored to active service, with additional rank. His promotion, unsolicited and unexpected, was therefore doubly dear to a soldier's feelings; and with excusable pride, he announced it to his beautiful companion.

But the web of life is at best a tangled and party-coloured concern. While my father's eyes were sparkling with delight, he observed my mother's cheek grow pale, as the paper she had been looking over dropped from her powerless hand.

"Are you ill, dearest?" exclaimed the colonel eagerly. She could not reply, but pointed to a paragraph which had escaped his notice. He read it, and it announced her father's marriage.

This was indeed an unforeseen calamity, and many a cherished hope of future pardon was rudely annihilated. From Mr. Harrison's avowed disinclination to enter a second time into matrimonial engagements, it was rather an act of vengeance and displeasure, than the result of fancy or free-will. He disliked woman's society; he feared a woman's thrall; he avowed those feelings, and for seventeen years had acted on their impulse. What now could change his sentiments, and remove prejudices which through life he fostered? The motive was too apparent—to cut from all hope of inheritance his offending daughter and her unborn offspring. My mother nearly sunk beneath the blow; but my father bore it manfully. Every exertion to cheer and console his gentle partner was tried, and his efforts were not without success.

It would appear that from contingent inheritances, fortune had determined to cut my father off. Manus Blake had been ten years a benedict, and no family had blessed his union. His brothers, next in remainder, were not likely from taste or profession to enter into wedlock. Great, then, was the gallant colonel's astonishment, when a letter from the lord of Castle Blake announced the happy tidings, that his lady was "as ladies wished to be."

Time passed, my mother was safely confined, and I ushered into this "whirligig world." At the baptismal font I was, in presence of a score of Blakes, Burkes, Browns, and Bodkins, denominated "John." Both my grandsires rejoiced in this unpretending appellation; and which of the twain it was intended to honour, I never heard and never inquired. Well would it

have been for me had any saint in the calendar been selected for my patron rather than the Baptist, and this my memoirs will prove.

In due time, Manus Blake's helpmate produced a boy; and, as Southeby sings, "there was joy in Atzlan." Now, Manus venerated his father's memory, and the heir of Castle Blake was therefore designated by the same name that had already been bestowed on me.

If my baptism had been honoured by the heads of divers clans, and representatives from all the tribes, it may be well imagined what a momentous affair the christening of the heir of our ancient house was. All kith, kin, and relations, even to the third and fourth generation, were bidden; and, of course, my parents were duly summoned. My mother's health was not sufficiently established to permit her venturing from home, and the colonel was obliged to attend the ceremonial without her. Deeply he regretted it; and had it been possible to be absent without giving mortal offence to his kind-hearted brother, he would have excused himself. To go was unavoidable; with a heavy heart he bade his beloved Ellen an affectionate farewell, and set out with a presentiment of impending misfortune—for one whom he should avoid was there—the wife of his deadly enemy, and his quondam admirer, Harriette Kirwan. Little did Manus Blake anticipate the misery which his unconscious agency would bring about, when he invited his new neighbours, the Donovans, to meet his favourite brother.

The property to which Mr. Donovan had become accidentally the heir, adjoined the estates of Castle Blake; and shortly after his marriage, he came down with his beautiful bride to take a formal possession. Anxious as he was to obtain with his new acquirement a footing among the aristocracy, he knew that this only was to be effected through his wife's connexion with the leading families. At first he kept aloof from my uncle; but speedily discovering that without his countenance, his assumed ease could not be maintained, he changed his tactics, and endeavoured to conciliate the lord of Castle Blake. In this his wife willingly assisted, and formal visitings had been interchanged before the rebellion exploded and Donovan joined the royalists in Castlebar.

There, undoubtedly, he had used sinister means to injure my father with the commanding officers; but Cæsar Blake's unexpected adherence to the royal cause rendered any attempt to impeach his loyalty absurd. Donovan returned home a foiled and disappointed intriguer. With my father he could not

compete openly; and with deep dissimulation, but unalterable hatred, he smothered his mortification as he best could, and determined to bring about a reconciliation, until time and accident would secure a safe but tedious revenge. Manus Blake, open and unsuspicuous to a fault, was easily gained over; he believed that all were sincere as himself, and freely offered his assistance to reconcile those who in love and ambition had been rivals, and mediate between an artful scoundrel and an ingenuous and confiding brother.

The approaching solemnity afforded a good opportunity to heal the feud and re-establish friendly feelings. Donovan and his wife were accordingly invited to be present. By both, the invitation was joyfully accepted. Different feelings influenced them;—with Harriette, reviving love; with her husband, undying hatred.

Already this ill-assorted couple had discovered that happiness attends no union heartless and hurried as their own. Donovan's vanity was flattered by the beauty of his wife—but beyond that, he had no tenderer feeling. With Harriette, a deep aversion, almost too powerful for concealment, succeeded the hour of madness which tempted her to give a hand to one whose character she despised, and whose person she detested. For a time, a gay equipage and showy ornaments amused her, while visiting and change of scene diverted an uneasy mind from thinking; but these had ceased to interest: *ennui* came on, reflection maddened, and her passion for Cæsar Blake, indelicate, criminal, and unholy, returned with additional violence, as if the obligations that bound them both increased it; when even to think was unpardonable, and hope was at an end.

It was twilight when my father entered the ivy-covered archway of his paternal domain. March had come in with a lion's violence: the trees groaned in the storm—a deserted dog was howling mournfully—an owl flitted heavily past—and a hare crossed the avenue before him. Cæsar Blake would have been freer from superstition than his countrymen, had he regarded these ominous appearances and sounds without emotion. He spurred on rapidly, and at the hall-door met his brother and his ancient enemy returning from the stables.

Donovan anticipated an interview, and was well prepared for it. With apparent openness he at once entered into explanations; and so artful was his address, that my father was cheated into a belief of his sincerity; and to all appearance, amity was renewed, and past differences forgotten.

Harriette, "the married woman," was first in the drawing-room, although the gallant colonel had persuaded himself that the business of the toilette would make her the last to enter it.

Their meeting, and their *tête-à-tête*, it is unnecessary to particularize. Cæsar thought his accomplished cousin had never looked so beautiful—while every smothered feeling in her breast rekindled with increasing violence. The omens that marked his journey were forgotten ; he was excited, flattered, almost possessed, and circumstances, trifling in themselves, assisted. For the first time he wore a colonel's uniform, for the first time he heard his new title echoed in the gay festival. Caution, fear, and prudence were lulled to sleep ; all around was gay and reckless merriment. The heir was in due form brought to the font ; my father and the seductive Harriette were the sponsors ; the holy rites were followed by the banquet ; the wine flowed gloriously ; music was heard in the hall ; the dance succeeded ; all was mirth and gallantry ; and Ellen, the gentle, devoted, and adoring Ellen, was half-forgotten ; and Harriette, all worthless as she was, usurped her place.

Reader, censure not Cæsar Blake too hastily ; let the wisest struggle with the temptation that assailed him, and let Platonists prate as they please, the stoutest resolution may fail, and even a philosopher discover that human nature is but weak ; and maugre the sophistries of schoolmen, " a man's a man for a' that !"

The night wore on ; the happy parents of the heir appeared removed beyond the cares and sorrows of humanity. Donovan improved his advantage, and showed himself so solicitous to eradicate every latent spark of past unkindness, that my father began to fancy he had judged him with too much severity. Yet Donovan never hated Cæsar Blake with half the intensity before, that the admiration his wife lavished on his enemy elicited now. That very evening, a disgraced servant of the Blakes, whom he had taken into his service, in tipsy loquacity apprised him of what he had never known before ; and he registered in heaven an oath of deadly vengeance. A blacker heart, a more tortured spirit than his, never occupied a human habitation : yet his laugh was loud, and he appeared the happiest of the happy. But while his manner exhibited well-dissembled confidence and mental tranquillity, he watched with a tiger's patience every look and action of his doomed rival ; and before the gay throng separated, he had seen enough to confirm his worst suspicions—his wife loved Cæsar Blake !

## CHAPTER XIII.

## GUILT AND MURDER.

Oh! too convincing—dangerously dear,  
 In woman's eye the unanswerable tear!  
 That weapon of her weakness she can wield,  
 To save, subdue—at once her spear and shield,  
 Avoid it—Virtue ebbs and Wisdom errs,  
 Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers!  
 What lost a world, and bade a hero fly?  
 The timid tear in Cleopatra's eye.  
 Yet be the soft triumvir's fault forgiven:  
 By this, how many lose not earth, but heaven!  
 Consign their souls to man's eternal foe,  
 And seal their own, to spare some wanton's woe!

\* \* \* \* Corsair.

Whose bullet through the night air sang,  
 Too nearly, deadly aimed to err?

*Bride of Abydos.*

THREE days passed, and hospitable rejoicings continued with unabated spirit, in honour of the long-denied blessing of an heir, which had now been vouchsafed to the lord of Castle Blake. Many of the guests remained; while those who were obliged to leave, were succeeded by a fresh supply of visitors. My father had fixed the third morning for his departure; but a stag was to be enlarged, from which a fine run was expected, and the colonel yielded to the earnest solicitation of his brother, and consented to extend his visit to another day.

On what trifles do the gravest occurrences of life depend! My father had promised faithfully that on this day he would be at Castlebar, and he had resolved to redeem the promise. Accordingly he combated the entreaties of his host, mounted his horse, and actually commenced his journey; but, unluckily, he cast a shoe, and stopped at a smith's shop to have it replaced. During this delay, the cart with the deer came up, attended by a numerous field. Again he was pressed to join the hunters; the prospect of a gallant run and the *bardinage* of the company overturned his resolutions, and he consented.

There was also another departure from Castle Blake, and that was Mr. Donovan's. Business of moment called him to Galway. The distance was long, the roads heavy, and he

left with a declaration that he should not be home till next morning.

Cæsar Blake, when he changed his intention of returning, despatched his servant to apprise his lady. Ellen was anxiously expecting him; she had dressed with unusual care; and her baby's cot, gaily decorated with ever-blown roses, was placed upon a sofa in the drawing-room. The day to her seemed interminably long; she gazed upon the slumbering child, she looked at the progress of the time-piece: she went to the window, the shades of evening were falling fast; and, as yet, her lord appeared not. Something had made her melancholy: she was still weak and nervous, it might be her husband's absence, it might be her father's marriage; and her eyes filled as they turned upon the darling pledge of pure and hallowed love. Ah! who can imagine a mother's feelings as she looks upon the first-born of an idolized father?

"How lovely he appears! his little cheeks,  
In their pure incarnation, vying with  
The rose-leaves strewn beneath him.  
And his lips, too,  
How beautifully parted!  
He smiles and sleeps! Sleep on  
And smile, thou little young inheritor  
Of a world—Sleep on and smile!  
Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering  
And innocent! Must the time  
Come, thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,  
Which were not thine nor mine? But now sleep on!—  
His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,  
And shining lids are trembling o'er his long  
Lashes—  
Half open, from beneath them, the clear blue  
Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream—  
Of what?—of Paradise! Ay! dream of it,  
My disinherited boy! 'Tis but a dream!"

"Hark! a horse stops. It is himself, thy own loved father, boy!" and Ellen flew with open arms to meet him. Alas! it was but the messenger to extinguish hope, deferred too long already.

The lights were blazing in Castle Blake, the dressing-bell had rung its second peal, and Harriette Donovan appeared in all the pride of beauty. Never had she looked lovelier, for never had she taken more pains to render her charms irresistible. She was dressed splendidly; her magnificent black hair contrasting artfully with the string of pearls that

secured it, while the sparkling necklace found its brilliancy eclipsed by

"Corruscations from a lightning eye."

Her tall and voluptuous figure moved over the carpet with that natural grace that art attains not, as she sought the distant sofa where she observed her cousin. Dinner was announced. Harriette leaned upon my father's arm; and, "like a blooming eastern bride," occupied the next place at table.

Alas! Cæsar Blake, there is one at home, weeping over an infant's cradle, whose chaste and holy tear is worth all the "wreathed smiles" that ever played round the rosy lips of the dangerous beauty "who sits beside thee!"

That morning the deer had made a gallant run; the pace was severe, and those who had ridden hard now drank deep, and, gradually dropping off one by one, sought their respective dormitories, and the table was deserted long before the usual hour. The ladies, also, from the late revelry of the preceding night, were inclined to seek their pillows; soon, therefore, the drawing room was deserted, Harriette disappeared, and my father retired to his chamber.

There he found a brilliant wood-fire sparkling in the hearth. He threw his coat aside, put on his dressing-gown, and with the indolence that a hard ride induces, stretched himself luxuriously upon a sofa, in quiet, dreamy listlessness, gazing upon the ruddy blaze. He thought of Ellen, and his heart smote him. Was she awake? or was she dreaming of him? No—at that lone late hour she was kneeling before her God, imploring protection for a sleeping babe, and invoking blessings on an absent husband!

Cæsar Blake was slumbering; a smart ride, a free carouse, a brilliant wood-fire, lulled his faculties into repose, and in a state of half-unconsciousness, in fancy, he was with Ellen and his child. A lip was softly pressed to his! was it a dream? He unclosed his eyes, and Harriette Donovan, "the married woman," was leaning in voluptuous *déshabille* over the sofa!

"Harriette!" he exclaimed, "is any thing wrong? Have you not retired? why are you at this hour waking?"

"Waking! Cæsar—" she replied wildly, "how can one so wretched as I expect to sleep? I have lost you. You slighted, derided, and deserted me—and yet I love you—for I cannot subdue feelings that are unconquerable!"

"Harriette, Harriette; this is madness!"

"Madness you may call it, Cæsar, but I am not mad. I loved you, and you scorned me; I hated you, cursed you, and in an hour of rage threw my hand away upon a wretch whom I despise, detest, execrate! I cannot be your wife—I will be your page—your mistress—your menial; I will follow you, live with you, die for you; but, Cæsar, only love me; for without your love, life is not durable!"

My father marked the wildness of her eye, and saw that she was fearfully agitated. The position in which he found himself was indeed alarming. "Harriette," he exclaimed, "by Heaven! you will be the ruin of both! Leave me—for your own sake—for mine—for one's who gave up home and father for me. I adjure you to leave this room—stay, and we are lost—we, and one beside who is guileless."

She paused irresolutely—her eyes flashed lightnings. Was she again despised? The thought maddened, and her heart throbbed almost to bursting. There was a long pause. "Yes—I will leave you! Cold, cruel, heartless as you are—I cannot curse you, Cæsar," and her wild looks softened and she melted into tears. "May you never feel the misery—the madness, that I do!" she almost fainted; she would have spoken, but her words found no utterance, while frequent sobs betrayed the inward storm that racked her bosom. My father could not witness such distress insensibly; his softer nature was touched—his weak, but human heart, gave way; he supported her in his arms—he placed her on the sofa—he brought her water—he talked and reasoned—and two o'clock found the erring fair one in his chamber.

"Harriette, farewell!" he said, as he pressed her to his heart! "May God forgive us!"

"Amen!" a deep revengeful voice responded, and Donovan stood in the door-way. He was dressed and armed. Presenting at my unfortunate father, at but three paces' distance, he drew the trigger—the bullet took effect—and Cæsar Blake fell upon the floor mortally wounded!

A dreadful commotion ensued. Harriette, the cause of all, fled shrieking to her chamber, while the murderer rushed down-stairs. His horse was waiting at the door; and long before the horror-stricken household could comprehend the meaning of the alarm, the homicide was far beyond pursuit.

Accident brought on this tragedy. Donovan, unhappily, found little delay in Galway, and less difficulty in traversing the cross-roads than he had anticipated when he left Castle Blake. In the evening he reached the intermediate town, in

which he had purposed stopping ; but induced by the earliness of the hour, he determined to push forward. His own apartment was in the same wing of the building in which that of Cæsar Blake was situated. The hour was late—all was quiet—but from one window a light appeared—and that was in the chamber of his enemy. What kept him waking ? He held his breath—dark suspicions crossed his mind—he gazed with starting eyes, and he saw a female form shadowed on the wall. Her arms were round the neck, her head was resting on the bosom of his enemy ! He rushed up-stairs, opened his own chamber and found it deserted !

The rest is known. His wife's infidelity was discovered ; and Cæsar Blake fell a martyr to the feebleness of man's resolution, and the madness of woman's love !

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Fast from his breast the blood is bubbling—

\* \* \* \* \*

He was thy hope—thy joy—thy love—thine all,  
And that last thought on him thou couldst not save

Sufficed to kill ;

Burst forth in one wild cry, and all was still !

*Bride of Abydos.*

Five bits of lead,

Or three, or two, or one, send very far !

*Don Juan.*

The consternation of the sleeping inmates of the castle, when awakened by the report of fire-arms and the loud outcries of the first domestics who entered the chamber of the dying man, is not to be described ; and never was there a wilder scene of tumult and horror than the house now presented. The shrieks of women, the imprecations of men, were everywhere heard, while some were calling for assistance, and others raving for revenge. Manus Blake, who had been among the foremost to reach the apartment of his unfortunate brother, raised him from the floor, and laid him gently on the bed. The surgeon of a dragoon regiment, who happened to be of the number of the guests, having cleared the chamber of the crowd, proceeded to examine my father's wound. A hasty inspection satisfied him that the injury was mortal, and one glance told Manus Blake that his favourite brother was doomed to fill an untimely grave. Ex-

presses were sent off in various directions, additional surgical assistance procured, and the curate of the parish despatched to break the melancholy tidings to my mother, and convey her without delay to Castle Blake, to bid an eternal farewell to him in whom her every hope of earthly happiness centred.

It would be a useless and painful detail to describe the agony of grief with which my mother received the fatal news, though gently and gradually communicated. At times, during the melancholy journey, her faculties appeared to be paralyzed by the excess of her misery; and for miles she remained in stupid, silent astonishment, as if feeling and perception had been overwhelmed, and extinguished altogether. Then, as if suddenly awaking to a consciousness of her wretchedness, a fit of frenzy would succeed this mute and torpid apathy, venting itself in piercing shrieks, until, exhausted, she fainted in the arms of the clergyman and her female attendant.

It was during the wildest of these bursts of anguish, that a carriage was passing that which bore the hapless mourner to her husband's death-bed. The early traveller—for morning was but breaking—appeared impatient of delay, and, from the narrowness of the road, a momentary stop was necessary, to allow the vehicles to proceed without collision. The interruption was noticed by those within, and the blinds, which had been drawn down, were for an instant raised. Great God! what must have been the feelings of her who occupied that gay equipage, as shriek succeeded shriek from the carriage that impeded her's? That frantic mourner was the woman whose happiness she had blasted—whom she widowed—whose babe she made an orphan—for the early traveller was Harriette Donovan, hurrying from the scene of misery and blood which her unholy love had caused.

When the fatal decision of the surgeon was communicated to Cæsar Blake, he bore it with manly resignation. At his earnest request, the room was cleared of all except his brother and a clergyman, who had hastened to offer spiritual consolation to the dying soldier. What passed was never known, farther than that the wounded man consigned his wife and child to his brother's protection, and exacted a solemn promise that no vindictive proceedings should be pursued against his murderer. The interview was long and melancholy; and when the surgeons were again admitted, Manus Blake exhibited tokens of the deepest sorrow, while

the minister of peace was totally unmanned. The night wore through; morning broke; momentarily Cæsar Blake became feebler; it was evident to all, that the hour of dissolution was approaching, and it became questionable whether the fading spark would hold out much longer, and enable the drooping soldier to take his last farewell of one, on whom, even amid the agonies of a painful departure, all his thoughts turned.

"Manus," said my father, in a feeble voice, "has morning dawned sufficiently to permit you to see the gate?"

"Yes, my dearest brother; compose yourself, Ellen will soon be here."

"Would that she were!" replied the dying man. "Remember, Manus—you know my last wish, and you will be all to my poor wife and my orphan child?"

"They shall be dear to me as a cherished sister and as an only boy!" and the iron nerves of my uncle could not control his emotions, while big tears stole down his manly cheek.

"Enough!" said my father, "I die contented. Oh, Ellen! could I but breathe my last sigh upon thy bosom—couldst thou but listen to my dying words, invoking blessings on thee and thy poor boy?"

"Compose yourself, dearest Cæsar, Ellen will be here immediately;" and a slight confusion in the chamber, announced the expected arrival. The mourner's carriage had entered the grand entrance, and was seen at a rapid pace proceeding down the avenue.

It was well for the poor sufferer that she was insensible to every thing around, or the present fearful visit would have formed a dreadful contrast to that joyous evening on which she first entered the portal of Castle Blake. The stopping of the carriage partially recalled her memory, and she wildly inquired "where she was?" But when the lofty figure of Manus Blake presented itself, his features marked with intense grief, every fear was realized—the full consciousness of misery returned—she uttered a piercing and sustained shriek of anguish, that reached the chamber of the dying man, and told that she was now painfully alive to the extent of her wretchedness.

Willingly would I pass over the scene that followed. They carried her up-stairs—they placed her beside her departing husband—her lips were laid to his, and a wild despairing glance fixed upon that fading eye which never had turned upon her with any but a look of love. "Ellen!" said a voice

so feeble as to be heard with difficulty, "I am going—fast—God bless—"

The surgeon held the wrist of the arm which was extended over the bed-coverings, and made a mute sign that my mother should be removed—Cæsar Blake's last sigh had parted!

"It is over!" said the churchman, raising his glistening eyes. "Into thy hands, Father, we commend him!"

"What!" screamed the wild voice of the mourner—"Who says he's dead?" "It's false!" Nor did the departed soldier bear the semblance of an extinguished spirit.

"He seemed to sleep, for you could scarcely tell  
(As he bled inwardly, no hideous river  
Or gore divulged the cause) that he was dead."

"Speak to me!" she continued—"Speak to Ellen, my own darling adored husband! Ha! he does not hear me!" she laid her lips to his; "I feel no breath;—Cæsar, speak! He is *dead!*" and in violent convulsions she sank upon the senseless body.

I must hurry the detail. All that human skill could do was done. While strength remained, shrieks and groans, that would have harrowed a marble breast to listen to, were heard from my mother's chamber; convulsions succeeded each other quickly, and during one of the most severe, a vessel in the head ruptured. Ellen's sufferings were mercifully ended; and before the remains of Cæsar Blake were cold, his wife lay at his side a corpse, and I was made an orphan!

\* \* \* \* \*

This frightful tragedy occasioned a powerful sensation: the sympathies of all classes were excited—all execrated the deed, all denounced the murderer; and, as a last token of respect, while the bodies were being waked, the castle was thronged by crowds of sincere mourners. On the day of the funeral, every road and height was covered with countless multitudes, and twenty thousand persons witnessed the melancholy ceremony.

When the coffins were extended side by side in the church-aisle, and the beautiful service for the dead was being performed, the simple inscriptions on the plates pointed a striking lesson of the insecurity of mortal life and human happiness. "Lieutenant-colonel Cæsar Blake, aged 28 years!"—And was that heap of clay the proud, and chivalrous, and gallant soldier? Short was his career! The scroll upon the lesser

lid was as laconic—"Dame Ellinor Blake, aged 19." Great God! brief was the space vouchsafed to one so fair and young and innocent!

The bodies were consigned to the tomb—"dust to dust" was spoken—and the earth rattled hollowly above the dead soldier and his wife! Amid tears and lamentations the grave was filled—the crowd were beginning to disperse—and the last sod was smoothed over "the narrow house." There was a momentary silence, while all looked with full hearts and fuller eyes on the little mound that covered "the brave and beautiful."

Just then a youthful stranger issued from the crowd, and gazed for an instant on the double grave. He knelt and kissed the turf, plucked a few blades from the herbage, and in a voice clear and distinct enough to be overheard by hundreds, exclaimed, "Cæsar Blake! before this tuft of grass is withered, your murderer shall fill as red a grave as this!" Turning from the spot, he disappeared among the dense multitude.

"Who is he?" asked many voices. None answered—for none knew.

\* \* \* \* \*

A month passed; the assizes were at hand, and Mr. Donovan who had absconded, on learning what the dying request of his victim had been, determined to come in and risk a trial. Had a rigorous prosecution been anticipated, he would not have hazarded this step; but, well assured that vindictive measures were not meditated by the relatives of the deceased, he was aware that by a proper application of money, all contingent chances of a conviction would be evaded. He subsidized accordingly the sub-sheriff—a jury was prepared—and the prisoner was arraigned, tried, and acquitted.

And yet Donovan's escape was very critical. The injunctions of a dying brother to Manus Blake were sacred, and therefore he took no steps to insure a conviction of the murderer; while the prisoner secured a powerful bar, a venal sheriff, and a packed jury, and the latter saved him.

The evidence was heard; the judge summed up, and charged unfavourably for the traverser. *Ten* of the jury were unanimous to find him guilty—*two* were for an acquittal; and these were professional *boot-eaters*.\*

\* In the kingdom of Connaught, a boot-eater meaneth a gentleman who enters his jury-box with his verdict ready for delivery; nor will he, from evidence or any other cause, alter the same, even though obliged "to eat his own boots."

"There is nothing like leather," says an old moral; and in Peter Donovan's case it was a proven truism. The jury for two long days and nights remained secluded. The ten for a conviction were "good men and true," but the *leather-cutters* were far more efficient—for they had entered the box regularly provisioned for the nonce, a precaution which their brethren had unhappily neglected. Jurymen cannot live on air, and the conclusion may be guessed; the *two* held out—the *ten* gave in—and Donovan was acquitted.

Consummate as that scoundrel's audacity was, he felt himself too happy in stealing from the assize-town unobserved. Swagger and impudence were unavailing now: the timid turned from him with aversion, and the bolder took no trouble to conceal their abhorrence. This was sufficiently annoying; but the truculent looks and muttered curses of the peasantry alarmed him far more. He perceived that his life was insecure; and he determined to leave the country for a time, until the storm blew over, and popular indignation should subside. Leaving the town at midnight, he reached his miserable home without any interruption; and, among low followers and broken sycophants, vainly strove to forget that blood was upon his hands.

Still, even here, he heard enough to make him anxious to expedite his departure: his tenantry were driven from the fairs; his servants insulted in the market-town; every post brought him threatening letters; and his own domain—and he never left it—was now deemed insecure. His arrangements were completed, and the next day he was to leave the neighbourhood, and seek safety in another land.

He sat at his own table; a low attorney, a dependant kinsman, the blackguards who had acquitted him, and two or three broken-down spendthrifts, formed fitting guests for a murderer's board.

In imitation of ancient houses, Donovan had retained a harper. To one naturally musical, having no ancestral recollections to wed him to half-forgotten usages, the presence of the bard was tolerated from vanity alone. To-night, the tunes he played were unhappily selected, and the names and melodies unsuited to the temper of the master of the house; and the old man was rudely dismissed from a board where music had no charms, and wine alone could produce a simulated mirth, which, when the lip smiles, cannot prevent the breast from sighing.

A heartless effort at hilarity vanishes at the most trifling

annoyance. Donovan had lost a favourite dog, and a considerable reward was offered, but in vain, for his recovery. That evening the head of the poor animal was affixed to his gate, and a scroll attached to it, declaring that a similar fate awaited the owner before another week would pass. No wonder the parting revelry was clouded by gloomy forebodings, and that the smile was forced, and the jest a mockery. The hour of separation was near; all had drunk deeply; for, to drown remorse, Donovan himself had latterly resorted to the bottle.

"We must cancel that will, Hawkins," he said: "Like every other new-married fool, I was bewitched, and, to cut off my next relation whom I hate, left every acre to that infernal woman." The attorney assented. "Poison every inch of the mearings; and if Blake's hounds attempt to draw a cover within miles, he may send a cart for their carcasses." The dependant nodded obedience. "And now for bed, boys, for I must be astir by cockcrow."

"Not till we have one glorious round!" exclaimed a ruined blackleg. "Fill, every man of ye. This is our host: long life to him! give him a full bumper!"

The party were seated in a back-room that looked into an enclosed garden. From its greater security, this apartment had been of late the favourite chamber of Donovan. The shutters were but partially closed; and the young moon, glancing in, was sometimes seen and sometimes hidden, for the night was boisterous and cloudy. The glasses were filled to the brim. The company rose to drink the toast with fitting honours, and the name of Donovan was on every lip. Suddenly the attorney pointed to the casement.

"What's that?" asked the host, with all the quickness of intuitive suspicion.

"It was only fancy," returned the man of law; "I thought I saw a human countenance peeping through the window there. It must have been the shadow of Miles Dogherty."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Donovan, as he looked round. "That stupid scoundrel of a servant always neglects to close the shutters: not that we need fear intruders here, for the garden-wall is twenty feet high."

"Poh!" said the boot-eater, "the devil himself could not get over that."

"We may as well, however, close the windows," said Donovan; and, stepping forward, he laid his hand upon the shutter. He started instantly. "By Heaven!" he exclaimed, "there is a man outside! Who's there?"

"*The avenger of Cæsar Blake!*" returned a voice that harrowed all that heard it. The words were scarcely uttered, when a close explosion shook the room; splintered glass flew across the table; and Donovan made one backward step, and fell heavily on the carpet. In rushed the servants; they raised their master—he was a dead man, for several bullets had ruptured the heart and divided the spine. Uproar and confusion ensued. After some delay, the garden was searched, for none of the guests wished to beard the murderer; but none was found; and the avenger of Cæsar Blake remained undiscovered.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### MY BOYHOOD.—MRS. BLAKE CASEY.

*Miss Hoyden.*—His honour desires you'll be so kind as to let us be married to-morrow.

*Young Fashion.*—To-morrow! No, no; 'tis now, this very hour, I would have the ceremony performed.

*Miss Hoyden.*—Ecod! with all my heart.

*Trip to Scarborough.*

Oh ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations,  
Holland, France, England, Germany, or Spain,  
I pray ye flog them upon all occasions,  
It mends their morals; never mind the pain.

*Don Juan.*

I WAS removed to Castle Blake, and placed in my aunt's nursery. Never was orphan more tenderly attended to, and never a dying pledge more faithfully redeemed, than that made by Manus Blake to my deceased parent. Attached as my uncle was to his long-expected heir, I seemed equally regarded. We were brought up like twin-brother, and our names were not more similar than our persons.

And yet my blundering relative injured me from the very cradle. He not only neglected to communicate my mother's death to Mr. Harrison; but when a letter was received from that singular personage, stating that he had seen the melancholy affair reported in the papers, and offering his protection to me, Manus, irritated at some passage in the epistle, that he imagined reflected on his brother's character, transmitted in reply a thundering philippic, so ingeniously worded as to

sting my grandfather to the quick, and smother every reviving spark of natural affection.

The records of infancy are not very interesting, nor are they of much importance to society at large, save in poetical biographies, when it is desirable to ascertain, if possible, by a stopwatch, the precise period when the first "lisp in numbers" can be authenticated. The history of a boyhood is not more valuable, excepting when the chronicled one slips off antecedent to his seventh year, a paragon of precocious piety, and leaving 'sayings and doings' sufficient for a saintly annual or methodist magazine. Indeed, boys in good health are in propensities and pursuits pretty similar; and in the kingdom of Connaught the course of education generally adopted is nearly the same. There they whip tops, and are whipped in turn; break windows and worry cats; learn to ride and read; are taught card-playing and their catechism; and so gradually improve, until in due time they shoot flying and kiss the nurse-maids. Now, my cousin and myself were no exceptions to "ingenuous youth," only that Jack possessed more animal spirits, with a finer developement of the organ of destructiveness. Father Roger Dowling, who confessed my aunt and superintended our education, could occasionally manage to keep me for an hour to my "humanities;" while Jack, unless strapped to the table, would not remain steady for a second; and for every window that I broke, he smashed twenty. Indeed Father Roger declared, "that were I removed from the evil influence and example of my kinsman, I was the making of as nate a scholar as ever thumbed a dictionary; but Jack, might the Lord mend him!—he, Roger, had taught two generations, and finished in less than no time sundry gentlemen whom he enumerated, and who, when they came under his tutelage, hardly knew a B from bull's foot: but Jack bate Bannagher, and would vex a saint even were he loaded with psalm-books."

We passed our thirteenth year, and still were at the feet of Father Roger. I wrote tolerably, and read Virgil. Jack was an execrable scribe, and knew as much of the Mantuan bard as he did of the author of Junius; but he was not deficient in other accomplishments. He shot well, rode dashingly, tied flies, cropped terriers, and, as Tony Joyce, the huntsman averred, was a most promising youth, provided they did not "smother him with larning." "If he was intended for a priest, it was right enough; but for a gentleman, and he too the head of the Blakes, what had he to do

with books and balderdash? He, Tony, wished he might only fill his grandfather's shoes, for he indeed was an honour to the name; and sure all the world knew that Ulick Blake was but a marksman." Father Roger, however, was not so sanguine touching his pupil's future career.—"He trusted he might be astray, and that Jack would come to a decent end; but he, Roger, could not forget Kit Costello, who was hanged at Ennis for shooting the sub-sheriff—and Jack Blake was as like Kit Costello in every turn as one pea was to another."

Whether it was that the eternal jeremiads of the confessor began to alarm Manus and his lady, certain it is that a public school was decided upon as the proper place to give Jack and me the last polish. "It was hard too," they admitted, "to part with such promising boys. They had no harm in their hearts, and young blood was warm." This consideration might have saved us from a probation of light food and heavy flogging at the academy of Loughrea; but while our fate was in the balance, an unforeseen accident occurred that consigned us to Doctor Bircham.

It so happened that Manus Blake had a female relative, who bore the plebeian surname of Casey. To do the good lady common justice, she did all she could to render it palatable to "ears polite," by affixing her maiden appellation; and hence, her letters were addressed and her cards engraven, "Mrs. Blake Casey." Now the defunct Casey in name and calling was equally unaristocratic, for he had been a tailor. In one of his periodical incursions into the kingdom of Connaught, on the forlorn-hope of collecting "moneys due," Providence—for marriages it is allowed are made in heaven—ordained that he should travel *tête à tête* in the Roscrea stage with Miss Honoria Blake. She was a stout gentlewoman and rather past maturity; and, as it turned out, never did two persons embark in the same vehicle on more unchristian terms with mankind than Honoria Blake and Jeremiah Casey aforesaid.

The lady was returning from a Blazer ball; and though, at first sight, she might have appeared rather corpulent for a "coryphee," nevertheless she delighted in country-dancing, and there was not a catch-weight in Galway more enduring, take her either at reel or jigg. Imagine her indignation, when, on the preceding night, she had been permitted to overlook a whist-table. Those on whom she had a legitimate claim were too drunk to stand; those who were not, left her to sit unheeded. None claimed "her soft hand," and her

figured muslin, its first appearance upon any stage, was never allowed to rustle down the middle!

Nor was Jeremiah Casey in happier mood. Every year his customers became more dilatory; and it appeared to him, that in Connaught, by a general consent, payments were to be procrastinated to the day of judgment.

Jerry had scoured the country from cockcrow to curfew. Of his numerous correspondents, sundry were sick, and divers invisible; one man was absent at a fox-hunt, another had bolted with his neighbour's wife, and those who favoured him with an interview were not more satisfactory. One, whom he had furnished with a bridal outfit, threatened him with instant death for recalling the event, and thereby wounding his feelings, as his lady had left him in a fortnight. Another generously offered to accept at six months for two hundred, provided Jerry handed over the balance, being eighty-four-pounds, six shillings, and four-pence, upon the spot. Mr. Bodkin had been cleaned out at the Curragh, and Mr. M'Dermott requested he would oblige him by discounting a bill. Mr. Kirwan was anxious to know on what night the Westport mail was robbed, as that event must have occurred, and himself suspected to have been present and *particeps criminis*, or he, Jerry, never would have the assurance to demand money from him at that time of the year. Mr. Burke felt offended at the indelicacy of the application, as, but five years before, he had actually paid him, Jerry, fifty pounds: and Mr. Donnelan, trusted the tenants would not hear he was a tailor, and from Dublin; he, Donnelan, wished him well, and feared, if discovered, that he could not save his life. In one house, he found the lower windows built up, as the occupant had quarrelled with the coroner. At another, even before he could announce his name, he was covered with a blunderbuss from the attic, and obliged to abscond with as much rapidity as if he had committed a felony. In short, Jeremiah Casey was returning a sadder, but not a richer man, than when he crossed the Shannon; and had half determined, like Mr. Daniel O'Connel, to "register a vow in heaven," never during the remainder of his natural life to apply shears to broadcloth for any customer westward of the bridge of Athlone.

Woman is an uncertain article; and so says every man who has passed five-and-twenty. Some of them are won in smiles, and others are best woed when sulky. I know not what tempted Jerry Casey, when driven desperate by bad

debts, to then begin thinking about matrimony; nor why Honor Blake, when at war with all the sex, should condescend to vow submission to a fraction of humanity. But Jerry was rich as a Jew; Honor living on sufferance with her clan, even unto the third and fourth generation. The result was, that after a courtship "short, sharp, and decisive," Honor Blake was united to Jeremiah Casey; and so said all the newspapers.

There was dire commotion among *the tribes*, when it was announced that one of "the ould stock" had committed matrimony with a tailor. But this indignation was deep, not loud. In the alphabet of Jerry's ledger the names of the complainants were awfully recorded. Though he, good easy man, might be trifled with, his lady, if roused, would probably exhibit different feelings. Quickly and quietly the indignity was forgotten; one by one, the kindred of Mrs. Casey condescended to drop in at dinner-time; Usher's Quay was convenient to the Four Courts; Jerry was "a dacent poor devil after all;" his port was sound—his *pot-luck* not amiss; and before the honeymoon had waned her horns, Blakes, Burkes, and Bodkins united legs under Mrs. Casey's mahogany.

So matters sped. Five years passed; and Jerry was called to his account, and slept with his fathers—if he had any such. He surfeited himself, poor man!—for he was a true Catholic—with eggs and bacon, after a black Lent, on an Easter Sunday; and Mrs. Casey found herself a disconsolate widow, having forty thousand pounds in government stock, divers houses in the city, an annuity of five hundred pounds, and Connaught securities sufficient to fill a travelling trunk.

Without loss of time, the relict of the departed tailor cut the Quay, engaged a newly furnished house, exchanged Jerry's "one-horse chay" for a chariot built to order by Hutton; and a brass-plate, large enough for a dentist, appeared on the door of No. 21, Merrion-square, bearing the name of "MRS. BLAKE CASEY," and underneath, in small letters, "*knock and ring*."

Then it was that by every post letters of condolence came pouring in. Natural affection, of course, excited the sympathies of Mrs. Casey's numerous connexions; but it was hinted that other causes assisted. Jerry's books had been handed over to Messrs. Sharp and Sweepall; and they had circulated Connaught, hoping, with equal politeness and sinceri-

ty, that all debts due to the late Jeremiah Casey, *Esquire*, would be directly discharged, and they, Sharp and Sweepall, saved the very disagreeable duty of enforcing immediate payment of the same.

My uncle Manus was nearest blood-relation to the afflicted widow. He had survived all his brothers. The captain was killed at Trafalgar, in command of a Spanish seventy-four; and the brigadier assassinated in the streets of Dresden, about a love affair which his blundering management had eclated. Consequently Manus was nearest and most natural heir to Honor Casey. He and the lady were therefore, in due time, formally reconciled; and, in proof of renewed amity, she accepted an invitation to Castle Blake, and set off for said place, in great distress of mind, and a new carriage.

Great were the preparations to give an honourable reception to Mrs. Blake Casey; and expectation was on tiptoe to see how the wealthy widow bore her good luck. Five o'clock struck, and a yellow chariot with four post-horses rolled under the grand gateway, and Jack and I ensconced ourselves in a convenient window, to command a good view of the important visiter.

On the box, a priggish-looking footman, in deep mourning and worsted epaulettes, sate beside the lady's maid. From a hasty inspection of his legs, Jack decided that he had been a favourite disciple of the departed tailor. On his knee he carried a large cage, in which a green parrot was deposited; and a worse disposed bird never crossed the line. Within, the widow sate in state, with an asthmatic poodle her companion. Trunks, boxes, and imperials were in and about the vehicle in such abundance, that had Jerry not been in purgatory, or heaven\*—for, as he levanted at the end of a strict Lent, his probation for short measures and long charges might have been abridged—one might believe that therein was contained a fresh outfit for every customer in the country.

We described Honor Blake to be a stout gentlewoman, and I was prepared to see a portly personage debark; but when she essayed it, a mountain of flesh endeavoured to extricate itself, as, by a flank movement, she attempted to clear the carriage-door. Mrs. Casey had indeed become a monster;

\* In the kingdom of Connaught, it is universally believed that tailors and musicians after death are cantoned in a place called "Fiddler's-green." As it is not marked on any map of Arrowsmith, I cannot describe its precise situation farther than that report places it unpleasantly contiguous to Pandemonium.

and as she clomb the steps with Manus Blake's assistance, her figure was so absurd, that my friend Jack sat down upon the carpet, to laugh with more convenience to himself.

It will be hardly necessary to observe that Mrs. Casey and her suite were fully as troublesome as could be expected. Before they had passed a week in Castle Blake, they hated all therein, and received an honest return. Father Roger hoped there was no sin in wishing Mrs. C. safe in heaven; while the prayers of Denis O'Brien—who since my father's death had become chief butler to my uncle—would have sent her in an opposite direction. Nor was the lady's establishment more fortunate in gaining the regard of the household. The maid was a verjuiced spinster, too old to love herself, and too ill-natured to look on. The footman was a regular snip; and from the configuration of his limbs, had obtained from the servants the surname of *Giblets*; the poodle was a nuisance, and the parrot had nearly bitten off my aunt's finger.

Between Jack and the entire set, a secret but deadly war was raging. He persecuted the spinster; put Giblets on a vicious horse, by which his bones were bruised, and his life endangered; trod, on all safe occasions, upon the poodle's tail, and kept the parrot in such eternal irritation, that Mother Casey herself dared not take a liberty with the offended bird, it is not marvellous, all things considered, that the visit should come to an untimely close; and so it did.

We have already described the great difficulty that Mrs. Casey experienced in depositing her person in a carriage, and also in extricating it from the same. Now, my aunt had a low four-wheeled chair, in which she occasionally drove over the demesne; and, as it afforded facilities to Mrs. Casey, which her own vehicle possessed not, she more than once had used it for an airing. One fine morning she determined on a drive, and Jack was despatched to order my aunt's chair. On his return, he overheard Manus Blake and Mrs. Casey holding a cabinet council, very imprudently, with open doors. Jack listened; his own name was pronounced, and there was little in the manner which could occasion personal vanity. Mrs. Casey, having premised that what she said was from family affection, although it distressed her to do so; but she could not conceal the truth; declared that the boys were on the road to ruin, and nothing could save them but a strict public school; and she concluded by earnestly recommending Doctor Bircham's.

Now, Jack had a horror of schools in general, and Bircham flogged with the left hand, and was reputed the hardest hitter that ever operated on a delinquent. Indeed, his establishment was a sort of purgatory for juvenile offenders, and the name of Bircham carried terror to the most desperate. Judge, then, Jack's consternation, when his father willingly consented and named an early day for our departure.

Jack, I regret to say, never evinced that meek and christian disposition which delighteth in repaying evil with good. He vowed vengeance against Mother Casey, and all appertaining to her; and, to use parliamentary language, he lost no time in redeeming his pledge.

The wheels of my aunt's chair grated on the gravel, and Mrs. Casey, as the day was fine, notified her intention of taking all her favourites along with her; cloaks, shawls, and umbrellas were put in, and so were the maid, the poodle, and the parrot. The stout gentle-woman ascended next, Manus Blake aiding and assisting; Giblets perched himself on the hind carriage, and off this precious party trundled.

But short was their excursion. Before the vehicle proceeded fifty yards, off came a hind wheel, and out came the company! A desperate outcry apprised Manus Blake of the accident: he looked, and there saw Giblets over his honoured mistress, and the poodle under her; the parrot had secured the maid's finger; and cloaks, cushions, and cage, formed a general wreck.

Promptly they were succoured: Mother Casey was carried to the house, and brought about by the usual restoratives, brandy and burnt feathers. The favourites had suffered severely; the poodle was lame—the maid's finger less by the nail—Giblets frightened to death—and the parrot bereaved of tail and topping. Well was it for all that the fatal cause of this capsizc remained unknown; Jack had privately purloined the linch-pin, and no wonder that the wheel followed it.

Yet dark suspicions haunted Mrs. Casey. The luckless vehicle belonged to Manus Blake, and Manus Blake was her next heir. The maid whispered doubtfully, and Giblets dropped mysterious hints. Deeper and deeper grew suspicion; and on the third day, and with brief ceremony, Mrs. Blake Casey moved off, "bag and baggage."

But, alas! the mischief was done, the decree had gone forth, and Jack and I were consigned to Doctor Bircham. We departed for Loughrea with heavy hearts—and Heaven knows! we had good reason. Fame had only done the

doctor justice; for, never since the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew, were poor devils flayed as we were.

Three years passed; the breach between Manus and his kinswoman was widened by the ingenuity of Giblets and the maid, until all communication ceased by mutual consent between the lord of Castle Blake and the relict of Jeremiah Casey, Esquire. Jack and I continued under the tutorage of Dr. Bircham, and, indeed, that left-handed professor sustained his well-earned reputation on our proper persons.

At last the joyful hour arrived that emancipated us from his thrall. Jack, being destined for the woolsack, was despatched to the Dublin University; and how he got entrance remains a mystery. I, like my poor father, was deemed fit food for gunpowder, and gazetted to an ensigncy; and, with a good horse, a gentlemanly kit, fifty guineas in my pocket, and as light a heart as ever bounded at "tuck of drum," I set out for the good town of Drogheda, to learn the art of war, and carry the regimental colours of the —— Militia.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE —— MILITIA.—COUNTRY QUARTERS.—MY RECEPTION  
THERE.

"Hark ye, Gil Blas," said he to me one day, "thou art no longer a child, and it is high time for a brisk lad of sixteen, like thee, to push thy fortune in the world." LE SAGE.

READER, do you recollect the Irish Militia? Have you ever had the good-luck to meet a regiment of the right sort, and dance at their ball, or be waked upon their mess-tables? I don't mean one of your city legions—a congregation of runaway apprentices, officered by reduced tradesmen, commanded by a chief corporator, with enough of discipline to escort a deserter, and sufficient spirit to steal linen from a hedge. Nor do I mean a northern battalion, where all were drawn men,\* who, poor souls! had they been permitted but a choice, would have never left the loom for the musket; whose officers were moral and married, and their regimental establishment of woman-kind on the scale of the 4th Veterans, in which every private was allowed a wife, and the adjutant

\* Soldiers chosen by ballot, in war time, and obliged to find a substitute, or serve in person.

had two. None of these do I mean; but one of the celebrated corps embodied in counties touching on that blessed stream, the Shannon; commanded by *real* gentlemen; all, from the colonel to the colour-bearer, keeping hack or hunter; carrying off diurnally his half-cooper of port; fighting his man as soon as he could find a decent quarrel; and eschewing matrimony as piously as the parish priest himself.

To such a distinguished corps it was my good-fortune to be attached. My letters of introduction procured me immediate attention from the field-officers; and with the rest I was as intimate in two days, as if I had been born in the regiment. I learned the manual and platoon; got on from a pint of port until I could walk steadily under a bottle; and in three months was so perfect in drill, that I was deemed competent to take the duties of a worn-out lieutenant, who had been allowed to go home on a sick-leave.

The detachment to which I was ordered off, was quartered in a small town adjoining the mountains, and stationed there to protect half-a-dozen gaugers, who were waging war against illicit whiskey. It consisted of two companies: one was commanded by Capt. O'Moore, and he was mad; the other by Captain Daly, and he was married. Of the subalterns, two were sick and absent, and the other twain sent from head quarters, being, as the colonel considered, unsuited for the corps. One drank water, kept Lent, played the fiddle, and professed anti-duelling principles: the other, because the commander disliked him for some cause with which we were unacquainted; he was, they said, reserved and unsocial, and from his brusque manners and cynical disposition, generally unpopular.

I had despatched my servants with my traps on the preceding day; and, when I reached my new quarters at dusk, found my apartments ready for my reception. As the town was not a regular military station, the men were billeted out, and the officers occupied a temporary barrack. This was a ruinous house belonging to a gentleman who had once possessed extensive properties in the neighbourhood, but had contrived to let the "dirty acres" slip through his fingers, and not even retain "the family pictures." The division of the mansion kept the numerous inmates tolerably apart, although under the same roof. The madman seized on the lower portion of the premises; the married man cantoned himself in the right wing of the first-floor; the centre chamber was occupied by his daughter; and in the left extremity my

household goods were deposited. In the upper apartments, the cynic had established himself above the captain ; the fiddler over me ; and thus was I placed between two nuisances—a noisy lunatic, and the most execrable musician that ever tormented catgut with horse-hair.

While Phil Bradley, my attendant, took my horse, he informed me that Captain Daly had left his card on my table, with a polite invitation to dinner. This was a customary civility to a new-comer, and, of course, I accepted it. Mounting to my domicile, I made a hasty toilet, and I had just concluded, when a tap at the door announced a visiter, and the gallant captain presented himself in form.

Had Captain Daly flourished fifty years before, I would have given my corporal oath that he was the archetype of Smollet's Weazle. Never, indeed, were two commanders so much alike, and, for the life of me, I could scarcely preserve my gravity. The Captain bowed, delivered a complimentary speech, to which I returned a suitable reply ; he hoped I was not tired—long ride—heavy roads—dinner ready ; and next moment I found myself in the chamber of state, and in due form was presented to Mrs. and Miss Daly.

The commander's helpmate formed as striking a contrast to her amiable husband in physical solidity, as substance does to shadow. She was at the middle age, a stout and florid personage, who when young had been undoubtedly handsome. Her corpulence had not rendered her inactive ; and a very superficial acquaintance was enough to prove, that in domestic management she was the stouter vessel.

The young lady inherited her mother's comeliness, while to her papa there seemed no more striking affinity than the generic characteristics which zoologists ascribe as common to the whole family of man. She was some twenty, “ay, by the mass ! or nearer” twenty-one ; and her dark eyes, pretty teeth, and *espiggle* air, assorted well with a round and Hebe-looking figure, which a few years would probably increase to stoutness, if not obesity.

Such was the party to whom I was introduced, and who were to be my next-door neighbours during my sojourn in country quarters. My appetite, after a twenty mile ride, was unexceptionable, and I yearned for the moment when dinner should appear ; nor was I long in expectancy.

“Lucinda, my dare,” said the captain’s lady, “just pop ye’r head over the banister, and tell Judy to dish. Misster Bleak, ye’ll excuse us this turn, it’s only pot-luck ye’ll get; but thus

we soldiers live :" and she laughed uproariously. Meanwhile the commander extracted a cork at the sideboard, that exploded like a pocket-pistol ; the butler, to a Boyne salmon placed *vis-à-vis* a stubble-goose, from which a perfume, not exactly that of "Araby the blest," exhaled ; there being a seasoned pudding in the interior of the bird, the handywork of Mrs. Daly herself.

Nothing could go off better than the entertainment. I ate like a traveller, but Captain D. beat me hollow, although, as his lady whispered, "he put it into a bad skin." Good eating produced good drinking ; the bottle of sherry vanished with the cheese, and the commander politely inquired, whether I would be for "screw or kettle." I chose the latter ; and Mrs. Daly, from a private store brought forward a square flask of excellent capacity, which contained as she averred, a liquor at the same time potent and pleasant, for "a man might take his stoup, and rise for early parade next morning fresh as a daisy."

If Mrs. Daly was great in culinary compositions, her skill was not inferior in fabricating what she termed a "stiff tumbler." Of course, she was placed over the kettle-department for the evening, and we were as happy as Irish kings. Miss Lucinda had been for two years an inmate of Mrs. Dowdall's seminary in Athenry, and there had learned the science of sweet sounds ; and, at her papa's request, sate down to favour me with a specimen of her powers, vocal and instrumental. The music-book was open, the symphony of that sentimental air "The wealth of the cottage" had commenced, when, prompt as an echo, a melancholy and irregular scraping answered it, announcing that the artist overhead was preparing an accompaniment.

"Blessed mother!" ejaculated Mrs. Daly, "it's that devil Kenrick ! Sure, I thought the rheumatism in his shoulder would keep him quiet for a week or two. Captain, my dare, send Tony up ; tell him to say the serjeant major's child's a dyin', or Mrs. Murphy's in the straw, or any thing that'll stop him, wid my blessin' into the bargain."

But before Tony could execute his mission, a new alarm arose without, and the lower door of the building was dashed in, as if a nine-pound shot had struck it. A yell and volley of oaths that rung through the barrack succeeded ; the symphony stopped ; the fiddle was heard no more ; Captain Daly turned pale ; Miss Lucinda crossed herself ; while the hostess exclaimed, with a fervour that bespoke the sincerity of

her imprecation, "May the curse of Cromwell attend ye night and day, Philip O'Moore!"

For some time the noise below was astounding. Tables were overturned, and chairs pelted about the room like oranges; and a tin horn, the barking of a terrier, the captain's yells, and the servant's roars of "murder," pealed through the building. While the tumult was at its height, a soldier rushed in, and begged a candle for the love of Jasus! as his master was in the dark, and "making smithereens of everything." But before the valet could be accommodated, Captain O'Moore added himself to our party.

His first appearance alarmed me, and no wonder. He was a tall, powerful, and athletic man, with amazingly broad shoulders, and legs that would surprise a coal-heaver. His dress was unique. He wore an old weather-beaten hunting-cap, to which it was his pleasure to affix a fox's brush. His frock had been once scarlet, but, from age and hard usage, the primitive hue was doubtful. A calf-skin vest overlapped leather inexpressibles. One leg was encased in a jockey-boot, while the other was contented with a hessian. In his right hand he carried a heavy brass-handled thong-whip, under his left arm a brown valise, and a rough, wire-haired bull-terrier followed him.

It was evident that the captain's company was an honour neither expected nor desired. None bade him welcome; and I returned what I thought an impudent salutation, with what Mrs. Malaprop calls "proper spirit." Daly frowned, his wife blazed, Lucinda pouted, and I looked on, a quiet, but not an inattentive spectator.

"Why the divil do none of you bid me sit down?" was the intruder's opening address. "Lucy, your nose will soon be as red as the old bird's—kiss me? Pooh! how coy you are! Mother Daly, mix me a tumbler—same strength as the last you take before you go to bed."

"Me drink, you scoundrel!" cried the lady, firing at the charge.

"Lucy, what a loss you were at,—should have taken me at the hop, and gone to the ball. Why, there was not such a turn-out these three years. Nicked Ralph Shaughnessy, by the by. Bet him ten pound to five, that I danced a set bare-legged. Slipped out, peeled, got boot-boy and brushes, laid on Day and Martin, blacked and polished—returned, pulled out Miss M'Afee, who's blind as a beetle. Hands across—down the middle—finished the set—and won the money before a soul knew skin from silk."

"Lord, what lies you tell," said Mrs. Daly.

"Lies! By this virgin hand!" and he kissed his own, "I have not bounced since I swore you never—" and he finished the sentence in pantomime, by turning his little finger upward, in an elevation that conveyed his meaning correctly. The lady understood it, for she seized the kettle, and menaced hostile demonstrations.

"Phil Moore, don't raise me—don't I say; or, by all the crosses in a Scotsman's kilt! I'll scald ye if I hang for it!"

The captain seemed alarmed, and fell back a pace or two. "Phoo!" he exclaimed, "a joke's a joke; and you know I love you! If old bare-bones,"—and he pointed to the master of the revels—"was planted, I'd make you Mistress O'Moore. But I expect some company, and you'll give me the *matarials*, won't ye?"

"Not a drap—not as much as would blind a midge. Off wid ye, Phil Moore, don't provoke me."

"Don't call me nicknames Mother Daly. Will you stick an O before the Moore, if you please, and not dock me as if I was a Daly. But the *matarials*"—and he dashed his hands into the sugar-bowl, and transported the contents into the capacious pockets of his hunting-frock. His next clutch was at the bottle, but in that Mrs. Daly anticipated him.

"Lend it to me, *jewel!* give it, *astore!*" quoth the commander, changing his battery from force to flattery.

Not a drop; not as much as would pison ye. Arrah! for shame—sind out and buy it, as yeer neighbours do."

"If I have a tester to bless myself upon, may I be hanged or married! Choose your worst," said he of the red jacket; "I lost my money at lansquenet, and my boot dancing in a bonfire."

"Well," returned the dame, "and ye stole one in its place."

"No; I borrowed it, as I will the *poteen*. I was up at cockcrow—meandered through the inn—and at a bagman's door, found a boot that fitted me. I pulled it on—and a left leg and top, in place of a leg and bottom. Do, give me the stuff; the ladies will be waiting."

"*Ladies!* not a drop."

"You won't?"

"I won't!" repeated Mrs. Daly. "By this cross! I won't," and she described a mysterious figure on the table with her finger.

"Why, then, by this cross, you will!" rejoined the com-

mander, undoing the straps of the portmanteau, which he kicked upon the floor, and then jumped on the sofa. Captain Daly anticipating coming danger, mounted the sideboard. A squall from the lady hostess, a shriek from Miss Lucinda followed—while, after a twist or two, a badger evolved from the valise, and, attacked by the terrier, trundled under the table, and a furious combat between the quadrupeds commenced.

Both ladies had gained a chair, and with shame I acknowledge that I was fairly on the table. Philip O'Moore by encouraging yells excited the dog; while, favoured by the angular disposition of the sideboard, the badger offered a stout resistance. "Mind your legs, ladies; his bite's mortal. Are ye safe, Captain Daly?" said the proprietor.

"Sibby, for the sake of the virgin! give him the bottle!" was the reply.

"Take it," said the lady, "and my black curse along wid it! Balfie the robber, was a born gentleman to you, Phil Moore!"

"Honour bright—is the whiskey mine? Say the word, Mother Daly, and I'll manage long-nose in a hurry," cried he of the red coat, as with his dog's assistance he secured the badger; then, seizing the bottle, he made his exit with a view-halloo that nearly deafened us, and retreated to his own den.

His absence restored order; Captain Daly descended from the sideboard, and the ladies resumed their chairs. Tony was directed to get a grilled bone; and in the interim, Mrs. Daly proposed a game at cards, and *Five-and-forty* was the one selected. Lucy and I were partners, and after an hour's play, I found myself minus a pound, and very desperately enamoured. Never was man more delighted with his evening's entertainment than I when I retired for the night. True, I had lost a bank-note: but Lucy had pressed my foot under the table with her own, and that was surely worth the money twice told.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## LOVE AND PIQUET.

Up rose the yellow moon—  
The devil's in the moon for mischief ; they  
Who called her chaste, methinks, began too soon  
Their nomenclature ; there is not a day,  
The longest, not the twenty-first of June,  
Sees half the business in a wicked way,  
On which three single hours of moonshine smile—  
And then she looks so modest all the while!

BYRON.

I FOUND country quarters far more agreeable than I imagined, when ordered off from Drogheda ; and in a few days made myself pretty comfortable in my racketty room, and the adjacent closet my dormitory, to which I became hourly more attached, as it was next to Miss Lucinda's chamber, with whom, by means of a decayed panel in the wainscot, I maintained a sort of Pyramus and Thisbe communication. My military duties were not severe, as I had only to accompany the gauger when he required assistance, in turn of duty with the cynic and fiddler. With these brethren of the sword, my intimacy was never great. The former offending me by the severity of his remarks upon the Daly family, and more particularly Miss Lucinda. The fiddler was a fool, a bore, and a bigot ; he believed firmly in the intercession of holy women, used holy water, frequented holy wells, and declared that heaven was unattainable by any means but a fish diet.

With Captain O'Moore I held a guarded intercourse. I found him eternally a borrower, and greatly disposed to treat me as a schoolboy, if I would but allow it. Indeed, he was anything but a safe companion, twice he persuaded me to shoot in his company. On the first expedition, he managed to upset a cobble, in which we were ferrying ourselves over to an island in a lake, and gave me a swim for my life, which I preserved with the loss of my fowling-piece. On the other occasion, he fired at a game-keeper, and to stop a prosecution, we were obliged to buy off the wounded man, the subsidy coming from my purse ; for, to do him justice, I never saw any portion of the circulating medium in his possession during our acquaintance, except what he won from me in teaching me piquet ; a course of which he recommended as an essential accomplishment for

a military man. My neighbours, the Dalys, were, therefore, my chief companions—indeed, we nearly lived together. Not that this society was altogether the most desirable, for he, poor man! was miserably hen-pecked, and she a regular white sergeant, who swore like a trooper. But Lucy was the magnet that attracted me; and if we ever dreamed of establishing a platonic flirtation, her honoured parents gave us the best of fair-play, and showed, by leaving us everlastingly together, how highly they estimated our prudence and discretion.

Among Lucy's numerous accomplishments, she might honestly include bold and graceful riding. She had a very pretty roan pony; and when the weather permitted it we rode over the country *tête-à-tête*, wherever fancy directed.

I had now been a month detached; March was going out with its proverbial mildness, and, seduced by the fineness of the day, we had prolonged our ride, and found it later than usual when we alighted at the barrack-door. The cynic was standing on the steps, yet he offered no resistance to my fair companion in dismounting; and I thought his cold acknowledgment, as she passed him, had more of a sneer than a smile in its expression. I felt piqued, and I would have been happy to have resented it had I only known how; but when a man seeks a quarrel, it is wonderful how soon fortune stands his friend.

That night the gauger sent in a requisition for a party. From a cause which it is unnecessary to explain, it was doubtful on whom the turn of duty fell; and whether the honour of attending the exciseman should devolve upon me, the cynic, or the fiddler, was what lawyers call, a point for argument. Indeed, under common circumstances, the thing would not have caused me a thought; the duty was but an agreeable night-walk, and never at a sweeter season did Philistines disturb an honest distiller. But I had private reasons for wishing to avoid still-hunting; and besides, I was smarting under real or imaginary courtesy.

We met in the orderly-room; O'Moore was there, and I think encouraged the cynic, and increased the misunderstanding between us. Words ran high; I was petulant, and he positive; the breach widened, until after delivering myself of a speech that I opined would require a hostile message, I left the room abruptly. It is right to say, that the fiddler, from a characteristic love of harmony, I suppose, when matters looked squally, good-naturedly cut short the cause of controversy, by taking the duty himself.

Youth will be foolish. A free untrammelled boyhood, a precocious maturity of constitution, intercourse with wild society, familiarity with wild opinions; all united in pushing me upon the stage of manhood years before a more delicate frame, or a more regular and refined education, would have permitted it. I had entered the world; I felt myself the member of a chivalrous profession; the object, for the first time, of woman's love—and fancied myself an ill-used man, when, in years and experience of human life, I was no better than a froward school-boy.

Still in high dudgeon, I walked up and down the court-yard, when a tap upon the shoulder made me turn briskly round, and Aylmer stood beside me.

"I have sought you, Mr. Blake—"

I interrupted him—"And I trust found me readily. But would not your friend save some trouble to us both?"

Aylmer smiled. "I am afraid I must disappoint you, Mister Blake, and you will have to look out for somebody else to practise at. No, no; when Frank Aylmer wants a quarrel, he must look for some other than Cæsar Blake's son."

I started; and he continued—

"I knew not till a few minutes since that you were the son of my valued friend.—Yes, I was his comrade and companion, when my years were green as your own; and he saved my commission by sacrificing his. But no more of this now; we will talk of it to-morrow. See, where that cowardly scoundrel!"—and he pointed to O'Moore, who was evidently watching the result—"is straining eye and ear to ascertain whether his wishes will be gratified by our quarelling. Leave him in uncertainty. Jack, be on your guard; you are at this moment on the verge of ruin; but I can—I will save you, and to-morrow shall tell how." He wrung my hand, and left me more astonished than I can describe. I came out, dying for an opportunity to mark my dislike of Aylmer, and I returned with a brotherly regard for that very man, whom, but a few minutes back, I was anxious to assassinate as gentlemen do the thing.

I entered my room a sadder man by far than when I perambulated the court-yard with an impending duel on my hands. Something in Aylmer's warning to me, and his manner to the Dalys, raised up a thousand teasing and alarming doubts. What was the danger—whence was the blow to come—and how was it to be avoided? I could not even

conjecture, and I wished earnestly for morning to arrive, when I should meet my father's friend, and learn the whole. For a while this uncertainty annoyed me, but gradually apprehensions wore away, and other and softer feelings succeeded.

Never on a lovelier night did a young ensign peep from a barrack-window. The moon—the beautiful moon, round as a drum-head, was shining gloriously. The river murmured sweetly, the breeze had sighed its last, and not a sound was heard but the barking of the village dogs, and measured tread of the sentry walking "his lonely round" beneath me. "There is a dangerous silence in that hour," singeth my Lord Byron, and so have all poets sung, from William Shakespeare to Walter Scott; for it appears,

"The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,  
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,  
Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws  
A loving languor, which is not repose."

All this I felt, no doubt; for though wisdom had cried in the street, I was, alas! insensible of her warning.

Confound poetry and old houses! The chink in the wainscot, originally so limited in its dimensions as to barely permit a billet to slip through, had gradually enlarged until "Lalla Rookh" found room enough to pass; daily the wood-work became more rickety and infirm; and the pannel at last dropped out altogether!

This was an unfortunate accident, and what was to be done? I proposed that we should consult a carpenter; but Lucy, an older soldier than I, prudently explained the danger; we might be brought in for barrack damages, and therefore agreed, that for our short time we would prop it up as we best could, and keep the misfortune to ourselves. Yet, as it turned out afterward, it would have been better had we called in the carpenter.

I said that Captain O'Moore had kindly undertaken to instruct me in piquet; but I found him an expensive master, as he would only play for money, he being an enemy to mis-spending time. Now, Lucy suggested, that she, though not an adept, was partial to that game—we could play together—and doubtless, a mutual improvement would bless our efforts. As a companion, Lucy was infinitely preferable; and, as a teacher, greatly cheaper. The captain played for half-crowns, and won invariably. Poor Lucy wagered nothing but kisses, and regularly rose a looser.

This is a cursed fascination attending play that ruins half the world. I, God knows! have proved it. Games of chance are bad—hells destructive—but piquet I look upon as doubly dangerous—it is a quiet, scientific, sentimental sort of business, and never played comfortably but in sober *tête-à-tête*. Captain Daily was an early man, and his lady said a thousand times, that one hour's sleep before midnight was worth a dozen after it. Lucy and I were no sluggards; and, in the innocence of our hearts, thought there could be no harm in playing a sober game ourselves. It was but stepping through the pannel; nobody would be the wiser; and if we made mistakes, there was no critical eye to comment on our blundering.

Nor did we determine on this course of cards without due consideration. At a late hour, lights, if seen in either of our apartments, might occasion observation. This, young ladies, no matter how conscious they might be of integrity, of intention, should eschew. Lucy, to do her justice, said so; and to avoid giving any handle to idle gossip, discovered that candles were unnecessary, for, as we played on honour, moonlight would do.

God help us! little did we imagine how rudely our harmless amusement would be interrupted! How our piquet-playing was discovered I never ascertained, as the secret of the panel was only known to Lucy and myself; but no doubt, some unlucky *mal-adresse* caused our ruin.

It had struck two, and I remember the deal was Lucy's. Suddenly we heard a whispering without—we listened—it ceased.—Pshaw! it was only the servants retiring to Mount Rascal, as they termed the garret. It was no illusion. After a brief pause Captain Daly thundered at the door, and demanded admittance. Of course I prepared to abdicate: though easily resolved, this was more difficult to accomplish; for, by accident or treachery, Mother Daily had gained an entrance into my apartments, and like a determined warrior, threw herself into the breach—I mean the broken panel.

Meanwhile, the lock of Lucy's door yielded, and an angry father and Captain O'Moore presented themselves. Mrs. Daly would have joined the company, but in the essay she stuck fast in the orifice, and after various and painful efforts was obliged to abandon the attempt, and unite herself with the main body, by the customary means of entrance.

Alas! everything appeared against us. Piquet by moonlight was considered most irregular—O'Moore laughed at

the idea—and the very cards declared unfavourably, for on examination it appeared, that in the hurry of the moment we had been playing from the whole pack !

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE CONSEQUENCES.

Is 't wise or fitting causeless to explore  
For facts against a virtuous woman's fame ?

BYRON.

Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow ! To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance !  
*The Rivals.*

NEVER since the birth of Hoyle, did two of his admirers cut a more ridiculous figure than did myself and the captain's heiress. Tony, to add to our embarrassment, introduced a pair of candles—while she hid herself in the window-curtains, and I stood doggedly awaiting the result of discovery in mute astonishment. Mrs. Daly's opening salutation was astounding. This night would be the death of her !—her darling husband would not long survive a broken heart !—and, as to the best of daughters—meaning thereby Miss Lu-cinda—why the sooner the cold grave was her portion the better ! Thus, for my unhappy partiality for piquet, it was quite clear that I would be the direct cause of annihilating a whole family, and demolish the Dalys, root and branch.

Nor was the captain, though generally a man of peace, unmoved on this occasion. Whether it was for instant action or stage effect, I shall not pretend to say, but certainly he looked very formidable, as he had tucked his old toasting-iron under his arm. To do him justice, he never attempted to draw ; but as he muttered something about "reparation or satisfaction," he touched the hilt repeatedly. Captain O'Moore was still more desperate ; his speech was almost the echo of his friend's, but far more truculent ; for he changed the "or" into "and," insisting that I should marry on the spot, and give Captain Daly a meeting at daylight, and that into the bargain. As if the uproar was not loud enough, Tony thought proper to show that he was not insensible to the family misfortune. Approaching his young

mistress, he set up a yell that would have startled a funeral. "Warroo! warroo! warroo!"\* he exclaimed, "Miss Lucy dare—arrah! tell us the worst at once, and make your parents asy, by sayin' ye are ruined!"

Now, however I might tolerate reproaches from the captain and his lady, I felt no inclination to listen to the hectoring of O'Moore, or Tony's jeremiads. With a thundering box I stretched the valet on the carpet, and changed his lament into roars of murder, that would frighten a fair. Indeed, had the noise not already awakened the household, Tony's outcries would have disturbed the sleeping beauty. Every inmate of the mansion, in all varieties of costume, was seen peeping through open doors, or craning over the banisters; while, to my relief, and the manifest confusion of both the commanders, the cynic in night-gown and slippers added himself to the group already collected "in my lady's chamber."

Aylmer's appearance was the signal for a fresh display of Mother Daly's grief, and her lord's threats of vengeance; but, after the first burst, they ceased, for it was astonishing with what composure and indifference the cynic regarded this affecting scene. He requested, in the coolest tone imaginable, to be informed "Why he was awakened?" and hinted, that if at two o'clock in the morning it was our fancy to amuse ourselves with hide-and-seek, we should not fall to loggerheads about the game; and also, confine our gambols to the lower story. Then came a general attempt at explanation; but, as we all opened together, detached portions of our respective speeches only could be heard. Mrs. Daly talked of matrimony and ruination; her husband of honourable redress; Captain O'Moore opined that an immediate meeting was unavoidable; and I muttered something, "about innocence and a fondness for piquet." After listening with polite attention, Aylmer appeared to comprehend the business tolerably; begged to speak to his young friend, meaning me, for a few moments; and without waiting a reply, beckoned me to follow, which I did, although O'Moore seemed inclined to make a demonstration toward, the door and refuse me egress.

We entered my apartment. "You have made a pretty kettle of fish of this affair," said the cynic.

I began to lay the blame on cards and rotten wood-work. "Pshaw!" he continued, "we have no time for nonsense.

\* A Connaught ebullition of distress.

Tell me, my good sir, what is it your intention to do? I promised last evening to be your friend, although I did not then anticipate how promptly my good offices would be required. You appear to have two choices—matrimony, or a fight. If you decide upon entering the holy estate, you will need a friend to assist at the ceremony, which, I presume, will be immediate." I shook my head. "Nay, early marriage has its advocates. In your case it may be for the best: your lady has considerable moral and military experience, and the advantage of you by five or six years. No doubt you will club pay, and form a delightful family party. Mrs. Daly will brew the punch, make the puddings, and scold the servant; the captain rock the cradle, and dry-nurse your's, or anybody's babe, belonging to the establishment. And then, the example! that is worth all besides: a steady—sober—virtuous married man at sixteen! Why you will live in story!"

I could not but smile at the flattering picture of domestic felicity that I was to realize; and he continued:—

"Then you are not for matrimony, I perceive; you prefer settling matters in another way: and in that case, too, you will require a friend."

I thanked him for his kindness, and begged to commit myself entirely to his directions.

"Very well," said my counsellor; "the sooner a bad business is ended the better. I presume you have no particular fancy for shooting at that scarecrow of a captain?"

"Indeed I have not. Fire at him, under any circumstances, I shall not. Of course I must meet him, and allow him to target me for a shot or two."

"I think not. But come, we must join them. Reject matrimony altogether. Then will O'Moore insist upon an immediate shooting match. Decline wasting powder upon Daly, and turn on his coadjutor with the ferocity of a tiger-cat. Never under a lion's exterior was concealed a more coward heart. Do this, and I will stake an orange-peeling against Miss Lucy's character—and those are heavy odds—that you sleep in a whole skin to-night, and suffer no more in purse than in person, excepting in reparation of the wainscot that between you and Lucy was so unfortunately broken down."

If Aylmer and I had fortified ourselves with secret council, I suspect the captains and the ladies had been similarly engaged. The scene of the interview was delicately chang-

ed from the fair one's room to the commander's chamber; Miss Lucy, of course, being left to indulge in "secret sorrow." There was much awkwardness when we presented ourselves. I took courage, and commenced by bearing most honourable testimony to the moral conduct of Miss Daly and myself. "Appearances might be unfavourable; but we were young; it was foolish certainly to play cards when we should be sleeping; but, after all, it was only an error in judgment, and circumspection for the future must redeem our mistake."

During my address, which I considered very conclusive in re-establishing the lady's reputation, the captain preserved a sulky silence; O'Moore exhibited symptoms of incredulity; and Mother Daly threatened to become hysterical. With difficulty, between sobs and sighs, she made her plaint. "Mr. Bleak," meaning me, "might clear himself; but if he took the vestment, who would believe the story? Lucy—the Lord look down upon her!—had got a blast;—and nobody worth a pair of *traheelns*\* would, in matrimony, touch her with the tongs. Blessed be God! her daughter was a gentlewoman. She had not much money, it was true, but the little she had was ready—none of your Galway securities, or Roscommon rent-charges, but Lord Tireragh's note of hand for five hundred pounds, attested by two living witnesses, and recoverable in three terms, as any attorney would declare."

Then Captain O'Moore figured in. "The business," he said, "was ridiculous; the thing was in a nutshell. He was a soldier—he could stand anything; but, honour bright! who the devil would believe such balderdash? Piquet was a good game—he, the captain, liked it; no man understood play better—bones and billiards, drafts or dominoes, all the same. He had lost fifty on the bellows, and won five hundred on the plate-warmer; but, by moonlight, he had never touched paper. It was all Tara-hill talk: Lucy was left without a rag of reputation, and had no more character than a priest's niece."

"Mr. Aylmer thought "Further discussion was unnecessary; it was better to come to business at once. Might he inquire, under the present unpleasant circumstances, what was expected from his young friend?"

\* *Traheelns* are the legs of Connemara stockings, which case the limbs of the traveller without cramping his toes. They are much worn by gentlemen who consider shoes superfluous.

Mrs. Daly lost no time in responding. "It was a shame for Mr. Aylmer to ask such a silly question; she would have expected more sense from an old officer and a staid\* man. Nothing at all, at all, was wanted, but that Misther Bleak should make her little girl an honest woman, that was all."

"And should Mr. Blake—for it was impossible to account for the fancies of young gentlemen—feel indisposed to contract matrimony at sixteen?"

"Oh! then the course was straight as a halbert. Honour bright! sod directly—no delay—ten paces—and fire away till one was nicked!"

"And who, Captain O'Moore, is it your good pleasure should be thus agreeably amused?" said I.

In reply, he pointed to the little commander, who seemed horribly alarmed at the pleasant prospect his friend's alternative placed before him, and then nodded to me.

"Allow me, sir," I replied, "to cut short this matter, by telling you plainly and decisively that I will not marry; and I altogether decline the honour of shooting at Captain Daly."

"What, not fight! and hold a commission in the — regiment?"

"Softly, gallant sir: that I have *not* said. Fight I will. He who presumes to doubt my courage, may prove it as speedily as he pleases; and if any man dares assert that Miss Lucinda's unhappy interview with me was anything but innocent and accidental, I shall crop his ears off, and indeed, I feel strong inclination to commence with one of the present company," and I fixed my eye upon the bravo. His colour waned; he looked black as midnight, clenched his fist, and appeared half inclined to strike me. I stepped back, and taking my sabre from a chair, where I had accidentally thrown it after coming from evening parade, continued: "Captain O'Moore, if I am understood aright, it will be unnecessary to add a word to what I have spoken. Your friend (for with you I hold no farther conversation) will find me ready. I have been the cause of detaining too long from bed this good company. Come, Aylmer" I bowed formally to Captain Daly—lower still to his lady wife—brushed clothes with Philip O'Moore—and left the room followed by the cynic.

Obvious reasons induced me to abandon my own chamber for a temporary shakedown on Alymer's sofa. Neither of

\* *Staid* is synonymous with *steady*.

us, however, felt inclined to seek our couches : tumblers were paraded, the kettle boiled, and down we sat to talk over the night's adventures, and arrange measures to meet any legal or honourable consequences that might attend piquet-playing by moonlight. Morning dawned before our conclave ended ; and, from the shrewd and caustic remarks that during our *tête-à-tête* fell from my singular companion, I perceived he was one who had studied mankind deeply, and I longed to learn from his own lips, what I suspected would be a strange detail—his history.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### CONFESIONS OF A CYNIC.

'Tis said that persons living on annuities  
Are longer lived than others—God knows why,  
Unless to plague the granters—yet so true it is,  
That some, I really think, do never die;  
Of any creditors, the worst a Jew it is,  
And *that's* their mode of furnishing supply :  
In my young days they lent me cash that way,  
Which I found very troublesome to pay.

*Don Juan.*

Well, that's the prettiest shawl—as I'm alive ! You'll give it me ?  
*Beppo.*

BREAKFAST ended, morning parade was over, and neither friendly nor hostile visiter appeared—none of the *dramatis personæ* of last night honoured the barrack-yard with their presence—the fiddler alone answered the call of duty ; and it seemed that by general consent, the command of the garrison would devolve upon the descendant of Orpheus.

More than once, during our *tête-à-tête*, Aylmer supported his opinions by a reference to personal experience, and I pressed him to tell me his private history. He smiled.

"I believe, my dear Blake, I shall best point the moral I am preaching by doing so, and prove to you how easily young gentlemen can ruin themselves. I shall not be tedious. I entered the world an orphan and at sixteen—my fortune a pair of colours and a few hundred pounds. I had a good constitution, animal spirits in abundance, and as much knowledge of the world as a certain Lothario of my acquaintance, who shall be nameless.

"My earlier military career is so closely connected with your father's history, that I shall merely tell you that I assisted in despoiling Miss M'Namara's supper, and in stuffing her chimney afterward. To me the consequences might have been ruinous; but your father saved my commission and sacrificed his own. I heard of his death in Jamaica, where we were soon after sent; and it is not for me to add how bitterly the untimely fate of my generous friend distressed me."

"We continued in the West Indies for five years, broiling under a tropical sun, and tormented by a tyrannical colonel. Conceive my delight when, by the most unexpected freak of fortune, I found myself liberated from the thrall of an ill-tempered martinet, and owner of ten thousand pounds in stock, and fifteen hundred a-year in dirty acres. A relative, too distant for me to build on for anything beyond a mourning-ring, had pleased to register me his heir—and a man who would not have assisted me in purchasing a sword-knot, left me the scrapings-up of a long and miserly existence."

"I did not dally, as you may believe, in Jamaica. Directly Up-Park was abandoned; I threw myself into the first sugar-ship that sailed—'courier-like,' reached the shores of Britain—exchanged into a light cavalry regiment, which in six months I left for the Blues."

"I was twenty-two that very day on which I mounted my first guard at St. James's. I was tolerably well-looking, pliable enough to adapt myself to the fripperies of fashion, with a round sum at Hammersley's, and an income sufficient for more than moderate enjoyment of the numerous pleasures which the most profligate capital in Europe offers to the youthful voluptuary. I had, or ought to have had, some knowledge of the world, for I entered on the theatre of life as early as yourself; and I should have known the value of money, having so long existed on the miserable pay of a lieutenant; yet, in three years, I dissipated a goodly inheritance, and was a ruined man at twenty-five!"

"And how, in this brief space," said I, interrupting him, "could you manage to wreck your fortunes so completely?"

The cynic smiled bitterly.

"Nothing more easily effected, my boy; with the assistance of a noble earl, two or three lords, a baronet, half-a-dozen M. P.'s, a club, a hell, a woman.

"You must know, that among my fancies, I had determined, whenever it pleased me to contract matrimony, to select a high-born wife. I, the descendant of an ancient line,

could not contaminate my blood by a union with aught but some scion from a noble tree. Now, the gallant lord who commanded my troop was heir to one of the oldest marquises in Britain : he condescended, from the moment I joined, to patronize me ; gradually we became inseparable ; and in due time were accounted the Pylades and Orestes of the Blues. Indeed, never was youthful friendship more warm and disinterested : he brought me everywhere ; introduced me to his family ; put me up in a club : his friends were mine ; his tradesmen supplied me ; I would not purchase a pointer without his consent ; and, at last, did all but swear by him.

"He was, poor fellow ! miserably embarrassed ; but his distresses, when I discovered them, interested me for him the more. I had money unemployed at my bankers, and would I allow my kind and noble friend to be inconvenienced for a thousand ? No, I offered him assistance—it was freely and liberally accepted ; and in return, he taught me play, made arrangements for me with a *figurante*, allowed me a share in his turf speculations, and was to me more than a brother. Yet fortune frowned upon him constantly : his horses broke down—his run at cards was abominable ;—but, hang the jade ! she has been notorious always for treating men of merit scurvily.

"My friend had a sister rather *passée* and proud as Lucifer. She was a fine woman, however ; and her blood, Jack—her progenitors had ridden side by side with the Norman bastard, and scrawled their autographs to Magna Charta in the field of Runymede. What could I do but love her ? and she smiled upon a suit which her brother avowedly encouraged. But, alas ! there was an obstacle ; her father was so lofty in his nobility, that nothing beneath an earl's coronet could be offered or entertained. Time however might do much : I was recommended patience, and of course submitted. But in private, the lady of my love was kind ; she heard my vows, and told me I was not indifferent to her. We walked, and rode, and danced, and flirted, until our union was chronicled in the Morning Post as one of those to occur at the end of the season. But, alas ! the season ended me.

It was very remarkable how much Lady Agnes deferred to my taste in articles of fancy and *virtù*. She scarcely visited a jeweller's without me ; and I was as well known at Howel and James's as their own bookkeeper. Her allowance from her noble father I found out was very small ; and

with an exemplary self-denial, she would have declined purchasing many a Cashmere shawl or *recherché* muff, had I not delicately contrived to pay for them, and force her to honour me by their acceptance. She loved *bijouterie* dearly; but the same high principle prevented her indulging expensive inclinations. But I rarely failed in discovering the object of her fancy, procured it directly, and laid it an offering on her shrine. And was I not well rewarded? When I placed the gem upon her finger, I pressed the beautiful hand of a peeress in her own right; and if the gift was unusually magnificent, her lips were not refused to mine, and I experienced the exquisite delight of kissing a descendant of the Conqueror! Never were lover's favours more graciously and gracefully acknowledged—never woman's gratitude warmer; although, indeed, we never played moonlight pi-quet—because, probably, Lady Agnes was too much an adept to waste time and instructions on a bungler.

"Meanwhile, my funds diminished fast; my account at Hammersley's was overdrawn; my rents anticipated by drafts upon my agent; and I was booked by every west-end tradesman, from the coach to the cane maker.

"This was an awkward discovery; but I was not inclined to sink a fallen star without a struggle. As yet I had never tried my hand at bill or bond, except to oblige my dear friend Lord —, whom I joined in securities for some thousands. The tribe of Israel were untouched—there was a mine in reserve, an El Dorado waiting for my acceptance. I mentioned to my noble companion that I was hard-up, and then indeed he proved his friendship. He introduced me to his own solicitor—none of your city scribes, your east-end pettifoggers—but a regular four-in-hander, who did the business of the Guards; in money matters liberal as a prince, and in delicate ones, 'close as a pill-box,' in short, as my noble friend averred, he was the 'soul of honour.'

"It was late that day when I dropped into Hanover-square, where the Marquis of — was domiciled. The lamps were lighted in the streets and morning visiting over. I found Lady Agnes in the back drawing-room quite alone; she seemed unusually out of spirits, and I, as in duty bound, tenderly inquired the cause. She continued silent, sighed heavily, and I thought I saw a tear stealing down her cheek. I put my arm gently round her waist, and, oh, rapture! she leaned her head upon my bosom, and burst into a flood of tears. 'Agnes, my idolized Agnes! what is the matter? Speak to me—tell me what makes you so unhappy?'

"Oh, Aylmer!" she murmured, "pray don't ask it. I am foolish, very foolish, to permit my feelings to overpower me. But you, from whom I conceal nothing—no, I cannot go on. Don't ask it, dear, *dear* Aylmer!" and in the ardour of her entreaty, she turned her lips to mine, and so closely too, that they met by accident.

"All this, of course, required that I should tenderly and imperatively insist upon an explanation. At last, amidst sighs and sobs, the truth came out. Ebers had turned resolute, insisted on a settlement of account, and positively refused Lady Agnes a box at the Opera, unless the subscription, a matter of some three hundred pounds, was promptly paid. "And has this paltry sum caused my Agnes a moment's pain?" Tears were the only answer, and tears, Jack, you will find are always forerunners of a kissing-match. I held her unresisting to my heart; told her how eternally her candour had obliged me; whispered that I would be with her soon, and hurried off from Hanover-square to procure the money, even were I to rob a church, or take to the road, and cry, 'stand to a true man.'

"And where was money to be had? Where, but from the 'soul of honour,' the attorney. I flew to his house. Indoors he luckily was, but, most unluckily, out of cash entirely. He would, however, 'see about it immediately, and in a day or two'—'A day or two! Zounds! an hour was an age—the thing must be done instantly.' He thought a moment, put his hand across his forehead, rang the bell, called a coach, and though his dinner was ready, the kind man set off to make me happy.

"We traversed an endless extent of city, and reached at last a place eastward of all the world, denominated in 'Guides to London' St. Mary-axe, and known to antiquaries, Jews, Bow-street runners, and old clothesmen. There he presented me, after a private colloquy in the corner, to a small stout smooth-visaged gentleman, who, for my note at two months for five hundred pounds, favoured me with three hundred in bank-notes, four casks of dried cod, two ditto of train-oil, and two of turpentine,—I forget the brands, but they were excellent. I inquired what the plague I was to do with fish and oil? But 'the soul of honour' at once declared, that Isaac must sell those valuables on my account; and three days afterward I received from Mr. Solomons, per solicitor, twenty-seven pounds, thirteen shillings, and twopence, being the balance of account on stock-fish, train-oil, and turpentine

agency and brokerage deducted. Mr. Solomons regretted that the assets were not more considerable—but whales had the last season been unusually abundant—turpentine was a drug—and every-body knew that fish should be held over till Lent, and then it would realize a fortune.

“Now, from the hour I entered that sink of usury, my ruin was expedited, and I went to the dogs in double-quick. My horses were sold in execution for an accommodation bond, in which I had joined my noble friend; the coach-maker seized my carriages; the figurante made away with my plate and furniture in Bruton-street, and bolted to the continent with a *ballet-master*. The tocsin of my distress sounded, and every harpy tradesman pounced on me like hawks upon a partridge. In this exigency, I applied to my noble friend, who had mysteriously disappeared. Though ‘the soul of honour’ he assured me that he could not show; and acquainted me that Lady Agnes had left town suddenly, to spend the holidays with a sick aunt. By the solicitor to the Guards he favoured me with a statement of account, and it there was clear and conclusive, that by a moiety of turf-losses, balance by play, &c. &c. I was indebted to my lord a cool fifty. In short, Jack, he had cleaned me out of about twelve thousand, and his amiable sister subsidized me to the tune of three thousand more. No descendant from the Conqueror could have managed the thing better.

“My ruin was complete; my commission sold; I was betrayed by my favourite servant, after he had carried off my wardrobe; arrested, and taken to a west-end sponging-house. Then came to me the worthy solicitor, and the little gentleman of St. Mary-axe. My estates could not be sold, but they could be annuitized; and it was done so effectually, that they were totally alienated from me during the lives of the Jew, the attorney, and their wives; and on the fifth evening, I was turned out of the lock-up-house, with a free foot, the clothes upon my back, and some three pounds to commence the world with again.

“Where should I head? So totally duped and ruined was I, that I felt a miserable satisfaction in knowing that fortune had done her worst. I turned mechanically westward, to view the scene of my recent folly. On my way to Bruton-street, I passed through Hanover-square, and, wrapped in my cloak, from the opposite palisades indulged in a farewell look at the mansion of my friend, the noble Marquis. Just then a carriage came round, and a female, full-dressed, de-

MY LIFE.

scended the steps. I gazed, and by the clear lamp-light recognized 'the lady of my love,' going to an Oratorio at Drury-lane! Her visit to her sick aunt had been marvelously short! Off rolled the carriage, and I proceeded on my pilgrimage.

"I crossed Bond-street and stopped before my own house. It was dark as Erebus: not a light glimmered in hall or window, for it was untenanted and unfurnished. And there, one week ago, I had been master—there, night after night, I luxuriated in splendid dissipation—for me the glass sparkled—on me woman smiled—and mirth, and wit, and music, added their charms to the blandishments of beauty. Where were these now? Fled like a vision; the false one in another land; the friend, proven and found worthless; the host, a dupe, an outcast, and a beggar! I laughed bitterly; for every thing I saw reminded me I was ruined. The carriages that passed, the liveried menials that elbowed me, the soldiers that I met—all brought associations that maddened; I could not breathe the very air in common with them, and rushing through the most obscure streets, never stopped, until I found myself close to the Tower.

"I entered a low tavern, but quitted it hastily, for it was a military house of call, and I might there meet those who would remember me. Going out, I jostled against a sergeant, and his exclamation was an Irish one: I spoke in return, and the native tongue, to which I had so often listened before I knew aught of man's villainy, came 'like music' on my ear. The soldier told me he was going down next day to Gravesend, to embark with a detachment for his regiment on the Peninsula. I asked him, as we strolled along, to take a glass—we stepped into the Black Horse on Tower Hill—and Captain Aylmer, *quondam* of the Blues, was soon in close conversation with Sergeant O'Callaghan of the "Faugh-a-ballaghs," over half a pint of brandy in a pot-house—and well would it have been for Captain Aylmer that he had always kept as honest company.

"While thus engaged, the barmaid brought in the evening-paper. I took it up, threw my eye carelessly over its columns, and there my name appeared most honourably recorded. I occupied no less than four paragraphs, all being extracted from morning contemporaries.

"In the first, it was intimated, *with regret*, 'that a gallant captain, who last week retired somewhat suddenly from the Household Brigade, had exchanged his house in Bruton-street for apartments in *Banco Regis*.'

" In the second, the editor gave a flat contradiction to 'a report that had crept into the Sunday prints, relative to an intended alliance between an ex-captain of the Blues, and a beautiful daughter of the house of Arlingford. What made this *on-dit* the more absurd was, that the Lady Agnes was shortly to bestow her hand upon Sir Peter Mackinnon, the celebrated Indian *millionaire*.'

" A third paragraph asserted, that the aforesaid Peter 'had amassed his immense wealth by speculations in opium, and not 'indigo,' as stated in the *Times* of yesterday.'

" But the fourth topped the business bravely. In it there was no affected mystification; no dash or asterisks: for the worthy editor, like an honest man, spoke plainly out.

" The recent break-down of Captain Aylmer of the Blues has occasioned a prodigious sensation in the different clubs. He is a defaulter, it is whispered, to the tune of sixty thousand pounds. The tribe of Judah, and certain west-end money-scriveners, are stated to be the principal sufferers. How the captain kept up appearances so long, seems extraordinary. We are sorry to say that the Earl of Ar—gf—d, who had procured for this unprincipled adventurer an *entrée* to the most fashionable circles, will be a very heavy loser. He had been unfortunately induced by the ex-captain, whose manners were exceedingly plausible, to join in some turf engagements. These proving unsuccessful, their discharge devolved upon the noble Earl, who, with that high and chivalrous spirit that distinguishes the house of Ar—gf—d, paid them most honourably. Captain Aylmer passed through Canterbury on Friday night, at fourteen minutes past eleven, in a chaise and four; and having by an hour and a quarter the start of his pursuers, there is little doubt but he has reached Boulogne, that *refugium peccatorum* safely.'

" Was not this a brave finale, Jack? Ruined; left without home, profession, resources, or a second shirt; stripped to my last guinea; it was necessary to load me with abuse, and not only prove to the world that I was undone, but brand me as a knave and a swindler; while my titled plunderers not only escaped an *exposé*, but, by slandering their ruined dupe, built up their tottering reputations!

" Had I not already determined to fly from the scene of weakness in me and perfidy in others, this unblushing falsity of public opinion would have driven me to take this step. The sergeant appeared a providential agent to assist my plans. I proposed myself as a volunteer for the 'Connaught

Rangers,' and right willingly my overture was accepted ; for seldom did so good a recruit offer himself. My purse contained some silver. I required, it is true, a few necessaries ; but where were they to be had—where the means to come from ? I, who three months before, could present a peeress with an opera-box, wanted sufficient funds to purchase slop-clothing for the outfit of a private soldier.

"I thought, in this exigency, of the Jew. He lived hard by, and surely he would not refuse me a few pounds. Leaving my companion for a while, I hastened to the usurer's domicile. I reached the gloomy street, environed by lanes and alleys, the haunts of vice and villainy. It was past seven on a Saturday ; his sabbath was over, and lights glimmered in his den, and told that Isaac had resumed his secular employment of authorised and legal robbery. I entered his filthy hall, opened the side-door, and stood before the astonished Israelite, who was busily occupied in weighing old plate behind his counter ; and, no doubt, the better part of it was stolen.

"Mechanically, he uncovered himself, placed his dingy hat upon a stool, and then with the same imperturbable attempt at silkiness, as if I were an unplucked victim, said, "What may your commands be, Captain Aylmer ?"

He spoke with some little hesitation, when he marked my kindling eye.

"Good sir, my business is but small. I want money ; a trifle will do."

"Why ! captain—"

"Pshaw ! drop the title ; you have among you un-captained me."

"Well, I thought you were in France, and safe from—"

"Whom ?" I exclaimed. "Have I anything left worth robbing ? No ! you want a new man, Isaac !"

"Nay, captain, I mean from the pursuit of sheriff's officers," said the Jew.

"Oh ! bailiffs. Pray, what would they want with me ? You, and your brother-plunderer, the attorney, have had more than sufficient assets to pay the other harpies. You engaged to do so—at least it was in the bond—was it not, Isaac ?"

"Oh, yes certainly ! But there were much moneys due ; and some creditors might not be merciful and wait !"

"Fy, fy ! Isaac ! you libel them : they are all merciful men—indeed they are *very merciful* ! They have taken all—

blood, marrow, vitals!—Phoo! the carcass is not worth the price of seizure! But the money.'

"What money?" asked the Jew.

"Ten pounds."

"As God will judge me! I have but one guinea in the house, and it is a light one!"

"Isaac, thou liest!"

"He swore a deep Hebrew imprecation. I waxed desperate. A large ebony ruler lay upon the counter; and as I took it accidentally in my hand, the devil whispered that it would be a good deed to knock out the usurer's brains, and lessen the number of my annuitants. But suddenly the Jew's eye brightened as it caught the sparkle of a gem upon my finger. Strange enough, a ring of Pauline's, my late sultana, had required some repairs from the jeweller; been given me when passing the shop, and actually remained upon my finger unnoticed; such was the fever of my mind, that an expensive ornament was at my disposal, when I conceived my whole property lay within the narrow limits of my purse.

"Is that a rose-diamond?" said the Israelite, in breathless anxiety.

"Yes; I bought it as such."

"Will you part with it?"

"Ay; if I met a man who had some money. You have none!"

"I just remember that Mrs. Solomon's got a commission from a friend to buy her such an article. Permit me to examine it."

"I looked at him. I had been so villainously robbed already, that I feared to confide my new-discovered treasure into the hands of the plunderer. 'If I trust it, will you not steal or change it?'

"Bah! you are merry, captain," said the Jew, with a grin.

"Merry!" I gave a fiendish laugh. "Ay, merry, I well may be. Take it—and by that prophet, your namesake, if you use aught of trickery with me now, I'll beat your brains out on the counter!"

"I pulled the ring off, he looked upon the jewel, then threw a look askance upon me, as the keeper steals a glance at a madman's eye.

"What will you have for it?"

"Thirty pounds."

"Bah! you jest: say half the money."

"No, Jew; I paid fifty for it a few months since."

" 'Say twenty.'

" 'No.'

" 'Twenty-five?'

" 'By the beard of Aaron! I'll not part with it a sixpence under thirty.'

" 'Well, well, wait a moment, I'll try if Mrs. S. could lend the money.'

" He rang a bell, and an old white-bearded Israelite answered it. To him he consigned the custody of the plate, disappeared behind a door concealed by a curtain, and in two minutes returned, counted down the money, rubbed the ring, spoke in Hebrew to his assistant, while I, without wasting a word upon the wretch, hurried off to join my companion.

" Well, Jack, we exchanged my clothes for others better suited to my altered estate; made some necessary purchases; retired to a double-bedded room; and next day, before the sun peeped through the dusky atmosphere of London, the ex-captain of the Blues started for Gravesend, to join a detachment of the 'Faugh-a-ballaghs.'

" I will not detain you with a narrative of my Peninsular campaigns; I bore my fallen fortunes with as much philosophy as I could muster; *roughed it* pretty well, did my duty steadily, was wounded at Badajoz and Vittoria, and returned to England sergeant-major of the regiment, and master of some hundred dollars of pay saved. Through the interest of an old schoolfellow, I got a lieutenancy in the militia, and now you have my history.

" You may be curious about my London acquaintances, and wish to know how they got on and prospered. The lady shall have of course, precedence. The fair descendant of the Conqueror actually married the *millionaire*, and there is not so miserable a wife within the bills of mortality. Sir Peter is a miser, and doles out grudgingly a pittance to his lady that a country-gentlewoman would reject. Her residence is an old mansion in the north, sometimes exchanged for a cheap lodging at Bath or Cheltenham, when the nabob is desired by his physician to use the waters. Her equipage, an ill-appointed chariot—her retinue a grizzled negro, and one or two clowns from Cumberland. Rebel she dares not; for the old opium-dealer arranged the settlements so adroitly, that everything is discretionary with his good pleasure. He had previously become owner of so many securities of the Marquis, that the Arlingford estates were nearly at his mercy; and as he is a mean and sordid tyrant, he lords it

over ‘the noble house,’ and makes them feel their painful dependency. No chance of a meliorated life awaits the Lady Agnes, and from death alone can she hope emancipation from a thrall that goads her almost to madness; and yet she dares not leave or disobey a being whom she abominates. I hear his health is excellent: long may it continue so!—long may he be spared to curse the mercenary wretch—a perjurer before God’s altar—a libel upon nobility—a by-word among women!

“As to the Earl her brother, he avoids a prison only by the privilege of a rotten borough. He, with some others of a lower caste, have been blasted for foul play. Fallen from his high and palmy state, he exists upon the bounty of a pensioned mistress, to whom, if report speaks truly, he is privately married. In short, he is almost as low in reputation as any titled swindler in the kingdom.

“Jack, there is retribution even in this world. Of four annuitants, *three* are gone to their accounts—the attorney died by his own hand, to escape the penalty of a detected forgery. None stands between me and my inheritance but the Jew—and though villains of his kind are said to live forever, I hope to see him planted yet, and sent to father Abraham after the remainder of the gang.”

Aylmer stopped, for a hackney chaise drove into the barrack-yard. We went to the window. Presently we saw Daly’s servant tie on some luggage, and down came the gallant captain in mufti, and “the best of daughters” in a sky-blue pelisse. After handing in the lady, he deposited his own person in the vehicle; the driver chirruped, the horses obeyed, and off they went like a wedding.

“Victory!” exclaimed the cynic, as the carriage rattled over the paving-stones; “the old lad,” and he pointed to the floor, “to get his due, has stood your friend, Jack. Don’t build on his assistance too far—he leaves gentlemen in the lurch, occasionally. But here comes dinner; bless your lucky planet, and sit down, ‘with what appetite you may.’”

## CHAPTER XX.

## JACK THE DEVIL.

Sir A.—You have been too lively, Jack.

Capt. A.—Nay, sir, upon my word—

Sir A.—Come, no lying, Jack ; I'm sure 'twas so. Come, no excuses, Jack—why, your father, you rogue, was so before you.

*The Rivals.*

EVENTS came thick upon each other. The Dalys had not departed above an hour, when the post came in, and "Ensign John Blake" appeared in the Gazette, promoted to a second lieutenancy in the 95th Rifles. My honest uncle had not forgotten me, and by exerting his county interest with Lord \_\_\_\_\_, obtained for me a removal to the line, and a commission in a favourite corps.

"I am truly gratified at this, my dear Jack," said Aylmer, for I was going to counsel you to leave this regiment. It is as bad a school for a Connaught gentleman to spend his nonage in, as could be selected. You have seen a little of headquarters ; everything there irregular and disorderly—and dissipation the order of the day. The colonel sets the example ; he can carry off more wine than any commander in the service, and of course his officers, like good soldiers, imitate their leader in all things. He is a singular personage, and although he and I are on but indifferent terms, I shall do him justice in my sketch. Brave as a lion—generous, if he had the means—mercenary, embarrassed, and extravagant—in short, a mass of contradictions. He has 'misused the King's press most damnably,' his fancy is to fill the regiment, not with 'revolted tapsters,' but tradesmen, whom drunkenness induces to list, and with these he is building a village on his own property. The shifts to which his necessities urge him, are often mean, and sometimes most ridiculous. He raised a hundred last summer, by furnishing the officers with gold-headed canes, he, of course, collecting the amount from the corps ; but when the cane-maker will be paid, time will best tell. A screech-owl is not more unmusical ; yet a short time ago, the commander discovered, what had escaped the observation of the master of the band, that every instrument was inharmonious—the horns were false ; trumpets fit only for the driver of a stage-coach ; bassoons flat ; flutes not worth a fig ; cymbals cracked ; and the very bells upon the

Turkish crescent "jangled out of tune. In short, every instrument was condemned, a new set provided by 'the maker to the Guards,' a subsidy of four hundred put in the colonel's pocket; for he *pouched* the band-fund, and the tradesman will be paid when the Greek kalends come round. The man is fearless; but even this good quality in the soldier is mischievous in him, from his propensity for duelling. Not long before you joined, a subaltern was dismissed for a gross deception in an exchange of horses. Now the colonel is nineteen stone, honest weight; but he cheerfully received a message from the delinquent, and *hipped* him next morning. The consequence was, that a fancy for fighting has crept into the corps, and there is a proneness among the younger officers to take offence where none could be intended, that makes the mess anything but a safe society, wherein to get drunk or commence an argument.

"With regard to your friends below-stairs; I fear I shall be scarce forgiven, when I inform you, that you have let slip a golden opportunity. Indeed, Jack, you had the offer of a noble alliance, and rejected it. Miss Lucinda is Captain Daly's child by courtesy and law; but the noble Baron of Tireragh claims without dispute the honours of paternity. *Madame Mère* was daughter to his gate-keeper, found favour in his sight, and *Missy* was the result of the *liaison*. Captain Daly had the honour of receiving the lady's hand a few days before her accouchement, and thus became legally entitled to Miss Lucy. A company, a child, and a note for five hundred, rewarded the complaisance of the commander.

"Of Daly, little is known. None ever heard him mention the place of his nativity. Indeed, his profession in early life would have been equally involved in obscurity, had it not pleased his helpmate, in course of a connubial argument, to hint that he had been a wig-maker. The captain is most unfortunate in his acquaintances; with the living he holds no intimacy; but the moment a man is fairly coffined, then the defunct turns out to have been his bosom friend.

"O'Moore is a true Bobadil; enacts the bully, and affects the madman. In everything appertaining to the safe keeping of his purse and person, he needs no control. His insanity is put on when required; one while it cloaks his cowardice, and at another, is a cover for his knavery.

"And, my dear Jack, was this a field for you to waste your youth in? Here, you would have learned jockeyship and duelling; sapped your constitution before it was matur-

ed; frittered your fortune away in drunkenness and debauchery; and for all this enjoy the honourable distinction of wearing a scarlet coat, wage war against illicit distillation, and, twice a year, mount a guard of honour upon the lodgings of a judge of assize.

"I shall not inquire how your account stands, between flirtation, and pounds, shillings, and pence; but I am certain you have come off cheaper by half than your predecessor, Mr. D'Arcy. The pony was a present from that swain; the brown habit with black braiding is noted in his tailor's ledger; indeed, I suspect the greater proportion of the young lady's personals could be derived from the same source. And yet, poor man! he was no piquet-player; but applied for permission to marry, which his family answered by removing him by return of post.

"Jack, there are many Lucindas in the world. You have had an early lesson from Miss Daly, and an early lecture from a ruined man. Eschew fashionable profligates; no matter whether they have sprung from the servants' hall, or are booked by Debrett. Avoid play: it is covert robbery; —all, from the lottery at Guildhall, to the little-go in a beer-house. Gamblers, titled and untitled, are just the same; and you will be fleeced at the billiard-table of a baron, as unmercifully as you would be plundered in a Jermyn-street hell. Remember Frank Aylmer's warning; and, when Isaac Solomons is gathered to his fathers, I will visit you in person, and learn how far you have profited by my counsels."

\* \* \* \* \*

Events, indeed, came thickly. Napoleon had landed at Cannes, and in double-quick, was hurrying to the capital! I, with every officer on leave, was ordered to join; and as the ninety-fifth were at Brussels, I had not a moment to spare. The disposal of my regimental property was entrusted to Aylmer, my horse despatched to Castle Blake; and bidding adieu to the militia in a carouse, from which a corpulent captain never recovered, and which very nearly finished my own career, I started, on recovering, for the metropolis.

To visit Connaught was impossible; and all I could do was to see my cousin Jack pending the sailing of the packet. Accordingly, I threw myself into the Kells day-coach, and at seven o'clock in the same evening was safely landed at *The Hibernian*, in Dawson-street.

Having discussed my dinner speedily, my first care was to discover my loving kinsman. Jack was an intern disciple of the 'Holy and undivided Trinity,' and directed by the waiter, I set out for that abode of the Muses.

Although within fifty miles, Jack and I had not seen each other since we parted at Castle Blake; but we corresponded pretty regularly. My cousin, if his own account was true, was the most exemplary student that ever looked forward to the woolssack. Nothing indeed could surpass the sobriety of his life and morals; and, but that an occasional allusion was made in his letters to a Miss Letitia Lightbody, who, it appeared, was an ornament to her sex, and a pattern for milliners in general, I should not have been surprised to find that my friend had turned to his mother's faith, become a rigid Catholic, given Father Roger's prophecy the lie, saved the county expense, the hangman some trouble, and died in the odour of sanctity, a second edition of St. Senanus—a gentleman canonized for celibacy by Mr. Thomas Moore—and where on such a point could a better authority be found?

It was past eight when I presented myself at the college-gate. Not being acquainted with the localities of the University, I addressed one of some half-dozen lazy-looking, blue-coated functionaries, who were lounging on benches in the porter's lodge; there keeping watch and ward beside a rousing coal-fire. There was not a corporation in Christendom who would not have chosen them "for her own," they seemed so oily and over-fed. One of these "gorbellied knaves" waddled out to answer me; and from him I discovered, that there would be some difficulty in identifying my worthy kinsman, there being six gentlemen of the name of Blake then resident in this seat of learning.

"Come, sir," said he of the blue-coat, as he assumed a leather hunting-cap and lighted lantern; "we'll make him out, never fear. I'll describe them as we go along. Here No. 2, ground-flour, left, lives one. They call him 'Dozey,' as he does nothing from Monday morning till Saturday night but sleep, drink beer, and set mousetraps."

"We won't disturb him, my friend; so pass by Dozey."

"Very well, sir," continued my guide. "No. 9, garret, right—there lives another of them. He is 'Bothered Blake,' deaf, dirty, and a premium man."

"Leave the dirty gentleman alone," said I.

"Just as you please," replied the polite porter. "Will you try 31, second, left? Him they have christened 'Be-

thesda Blake,' as he has got 'a call,' and lectures at prayer-meetings."

I shook my head.

"Then, there's one in 27, lame of a leg—they call him 'Pop and carry one!'"

"The lame lad won't suit me."

"Egad! I am fairly puzzled," said my guide, "unless it's 'Jack the Devil' you are looking for."

"That's the man, for a thousand!"

"Oh, then, he lives hard by. This way, sir. He chums with 'Mad Hamilton,' and they hang out 16, Botany Bay, first-floor, right."

"I am so glad you'll find him for me!"

"Find him!" ejaculated the fat functionary; "the Lord only knows where he is to be found at this hour! We'll try the rooms: we may see *the skip*, or perhaps, by accident, the master. Come along."

Accordingly, we entered Botany Bay, and halted before a door, which bore in white Roman characters the names of "Mr. Blake" and "Mr. Hamilton." Knock we did manfully; "but none would come, though we did call for them."

"Ay, sir, they're out. Lord! they're the wildest gentlemen within the gates, and they're in trouble. Well, more's the pity. Last night they gave a cockle party—and cockle parties, sir, end badly, I have remarked. All drunk—went upon the batter—and left the Brick Square and Botany Bay without a lamp, good, bad, or indifferent. They are to be before the Board to-morrow; and if they escape expulsion they're sure of being rusticated."

"Could you direct me where in town I shall have a chance of meeting Mr. Blake?" I inquired.

"Not I, faith! But now I remember, that Mr. O'Donel, one of the cockle party, came in just before yeerself; his rooms are in the next building, and we'll try if he knows."

Mounting two pair of stairs accordingly, Mr. O'Donel in person opened his door. I briefly explained my object, and apologized for disturbing him.

"No trouble whatever; step in, sir. Hinks, will you drive a nail?" and he pointed to a table, on which divers bottles were paraded. The guide without ceremony advanced and took a glass, which the host filled.

"Bad business, Mr. O'Donel; hang it! arn't there lamps enough outside without smashing those in college?"

"Who broke them?" inquired O'Donel. "I'm out of the

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scrape ; I was regularly sewed up, and could not have put one leg before the other, if they had made me archbishop of Canterbury. I hear they stole your lanterns, and you were so drunk that you never missed them till morning!"

" Well, well, time will tell : good night, sir." I slipped a gratuity, and he disappeared.

When alone, I explained to Jack's companion the shortness of my halt in town, and how necessary it was to find his brother in iniquity with as little delay as possible. Promptly he offered to assist my researches, premising that if he could not unkennel 'Jack the Devil,' then was all inquiry useless until to-morrow. " We have not a moment to lose, or I shall be shut in. We'll take Jack's regular beat and, I have little doubt, unharbour him." Accordingly he tucked me under the arm, and off we set.

" Let me see—this is Lady Abbot's ball. Well, he won't be there, as he is out of temper. That is *nine* now striking ; and probably, being in a sentimental mood, he will be taking tea with Miss Lightbody, the mantua-maker in Nassau-street. If we don't find him there, at *ten* we'll try the theatre—*Eleven*, the 'Silver Hell,' in Exchange-street—*Twelve*, he'll be at the 'House of Lords,' or picking a broiled bone at 'Nosey M'Keown's'—*One*, dancing at the 'Free-and-easy,' or singing in 'the Hole-in-the-Wall'—*Two*, we shall find him on the ramble—*Three*, we'll drop into St. Andrew's watch-house ; and after that, for he's not to say a late sitter-up, we'll be pretty sure of catching him in bed taking his snooze at 'the Coal-Hole,' in Essex-street."

I thought of Father Roger; Kit Costello himself could not match Jack the Devil in the multiplicity of his unholy avocations.

We found Miss Letitia "at home," and were shown by an elderly assistant into a parlour behind the shop, where the lady was seated at a table covered with the shreds and patches of millinery litter. My introduction as Jack the Devil's kinsman procured me a most gracious reception ; indeed, Miss Lightbody was pleased to compliment my appearance, which she compared with a portrait of Master Jack which ornamented her chimney-piece, and which she averred might pass for a likeness of myself. Whether my late *escapade* at country quarters was too vivid in my recollection, and made me look with suspicion upon strangers, certainly I thought my cousin's description of this "ornament of her sex" rather overdrawn. She was a fine creature enough,

but she "looked every inch" a mantua-maker. The style of her dress was much too florid for my fancy—and she exhibited an assortment of jewellery in rings, bracelets, and brooches, that was far too exuberant for a fastidious taste, and did not add "to that majesty of virtue," of which article, according to Jack's epistles, she possessed a very extensive stock.

From this lady, O'Donel ascertained that the object of our researches had gone to keep an appointment at a coffee-house. Thither my guide piloted me, and there we discovered Jack the Devil in close conclave with a fashionable young man, who, my companion informed me was assistant-surgeon of the 4th Dragoon Guards.

So occupied were my cousin and his friend with their business, that we established ourselves without being noticed, in the very next box to that in which they had ensconced themselves; and as we were only separated by a slight curtain, every syllable they spoke was overheard distinctly, and O'Donel winked, and signified that we should listen to their *tête-à-tête*.

"We shall be rusticated to a moral," said my relative with the evil surname. "The *skip* would swear an albili, but they won't believe his oath. They know we had that infernal cockle party; and there was, unfortunately, nobody sufficiently drunk for mischief but ourselves, except devils of good characters—men like Dozey Blake, who creep quietly to bed when they can sit upon their chairs no longer."

"Well, I think," said the surgeon, "a sick certificate will do—but the disease?"

"Consumption," said Jack the Devil, "I had a fourth cousin that died of it."

"It won't do"—said his counsellor; "they will expect you to drink milk, eat fish, and wear flannel."

"D—n fish and flannel!" replied the invalid. "What do you think of blood in the head?"

"Won't answer"—was the reply; "they would put you on the muzzle, interdict port, and prohibit fox-hunting. Come, I have it; you have overgrown your strength, require country air, gentle exercise, and a generous diet. Could you manage a short cough?" The doctor hemmed—the patient imitated it.

"Very good: try again—excellent; I have seen a man in pthisis that could not cough as well. What name shall I sign; are you particular about your physician?"

"Not very," returned Jack the Devil; "the surgeon-general bears a great name in Connaught."

"No better authority need be," said he of the Dragoons; "so here you go, honest Philip Crampton. Stop, I'll just add that you go down by easy stages, and are to avoid damp sheets and mental exertion, take exercise on horseback, &c. And now, where shall we toddle to? It is too late for the play, and too early for the "Hole-in-the-wall."

"Why, I promised, if possible, to sup with Letitia: so come with me. I must, you know, sleep in College, to go like a regular man before the Board to-morrow. I'll just call at Hynes', and tell him to send in plovers and a grilled bone."

But our appearance changed these arrangements. Jack embraced me with delight; we all adjourned to "the Hibernian." supped merrily, and separated before midnight, as became a reformed militia-man and a sober student.

"Next day, Jack, with "Mad Hamilton" and a couple of north-country candidates for holy orders, were honoured by the provost and senior fellows with a private interview, and then and there obtained a full permission to visit their respective relatives for a period of twelve calendar months.

We parted that evening, I to embark for Holyhead, and Jack to convey his sick certificate to Galway, and try how far native air would benefit an enfeebled constitution. Indeed it was marvellous with what apparent strength of lungs the patient cursed a passenger out of the box-seat—but in consumptive cases symptoms are wonderfully deceptive.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## DRURY-LANE.—THE RAINBOW.

A mighty mass of brick, and stone, and shipping,  
 Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye  
 Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping  
 In sight, then lost amidst the forestry  
 Of masts ; a wilderness of steeples peeping  
 On tiptoe, through their sea-coal canopy :  
 A huge, dun cupola like foolscap crown  
 On a fool's head—and there is London town !

*Don Juan.*

Fire and faggots, sir, if you are not Lord Foppington, who the devil are you ?

*Trip to Scarborough.*

It was a lovely evening in the latter end of April, when I was set down from a Shrewsbury coach, at Hatchett's, in Piccadilly. Now, indeed, I was fairly launched upon the world: landed in the metropolis of Britain, master of my own actions, with a full purse, a light heart, the benefit of a recent *escapade*, and of Aylmer's example. True, my time was limited to a few days, and in that brief space a military outfit must be completed. I did not dally; discussed my dinner "in double-quicq;" set off to visit tailors and boot-makers, to whom I had been especially recommended; and having given necessary directions to these important functionaries, I called a coach, and was driven to Drury-lane Theatre.

I felt like a greyhound in a leash, dying to slip the couple, see life in London, and "run riot" for the few short days allowed me. But I looked suspiciously around; Aylmer was before my eyes: here I was, and *here* he had been ruined. Forewarned by his experience, I determined to steer a clear course amid the dangers and temptations of the modern Babylon. Against the purse, rather than the person, hostile demonstrations were to be apprehended; and I therefore limited the contents of my pocket to a small sum for sights and coach-hire, with a ten-pound note as a "*corps de reserve*," should any exigency require a fresh supply.

Hackneyed as I am now in London spectacles, the night on which I entered the undress circle of Drury-lane will never pass from my memory.

The second act of a very splendid melodrame had commenced. The matchless singing of Braham and Stephens,

then in their zenith ; the scenic beauty of the stage ; the action of the pantomime ; the splendour of the processions ; the dancing of the *corps de ballet*—were to me perfectly fascinating ; and till the curtain fell, I was rapt in wonder and delight, and never took my eyes from the business of the drama for a moment. Nor with the conclusion of the play did my astonishment terminate ; the house was fashionably crowded, and the dress-circle presented a blaze of beauty—a galaxy of “sparkling eyes,” on which I thought I could have gazed for ever !

“ You are a stranger to the London stage,” said a gentleman, to whom during the course of the performance I had frequently applied for information, which with great politeness he supplied.

“ I am not only to the stage, but to the town, for I arrived from Ireland but this evening.”

“ Indeed ?” replied the stranger ; “ is not this piece most interesting ? It is one of the most delightful dramas I ever witnessed. The scenery so beautiful, the illusion so perfect, that it looks reality. If to me, to whom the stage for years has been familiar, it appear so, how much more forcibly must it strike one who for the first time has entered a London theatre ?”

Of course, I could not but express my admiration warmly.

“ You have much to see in this mighty capital,” continued the stranger ; “ and at your years, young gentleman, objects of curiosity are sought after with avidity. You have, no doubt, some cicerone, some friend, to use the common *parlance* of the world, ‘to show the lions.’ ”

“ No, sir,” I replied, “ I am alone in the metropolis. My visit is a hurried one, for in three days I leave London for the continent, to join my regiment at Brussels.”

“ Then will you pardon me ?” said my companion, “ I am about to take a liberty ; it is, however, kindly meant, and I trust it will be as kindly received. Let me entreat you to be cautious ; look on every woman with distrust, on every stranger with suspicion. Recollect the myriad of dangers to which youth, in this overgrown city, is exposed. All that can excite the fancy and the passions will be lavishly presented. Vice and villainy here are masked under the most flattering appearances ; knavery assumes the garb of fashion ; and, believe me, much experience, and far more prudence and self-control than fall commonly to the lot of one so young, will be required to protect you from the dangerous and besetting

allurements of this splendid and most profligate metropolis."

I felt the kindness of the unknown. He spoke with the warmth of a parent, the wisdom of a philosopher—and his words were the very echo of Aylmer's parting admonition. I looked at the stranger; he was scarcely past the meridian of life, plain and grave, but gentlemanly in his dress. He might, from external appearances, be a parson, a physician, a professor. My guess was wrong: before we parted he obliged me with his card, and on it was engraven, "Lieut-colonel Edwards, 4th Dragoon Guards, 8, Portman-square."

Need I say, that I expressed my gratitude to the gallant colonel warmly? I told him, however, that I had been duly prepared for a *début* upon town; mentioned my friend Aylmer, and assured him that his advice was treasured, and his misfortunes had left a permanent impression on my memory.

"You were indeed fortunate, my young friend, in coming here fortified with good counsel, and better still, a firm resolution to profit by it. But the bell rings, and now for the farce."

During the remainder of the entertainment, I felt how particularly fortunate I had been in making the acquaintance I had done. The colonel knew everything and everybody; he was a moralist; but he was a man of the world; pointed out peers and peeresses in the private boxes, and Jews, bankers, and stock-brokers in the dress circle; showed me the performers, and favoured me with their biographies; named the chief actresses, and obliged me with a list of their keepers, past and present: in truth, as Ophelia says, "he was good as a chorus."

The curtain dropped. The colonel apologized for not bringing me home, but his lady was an invalid; and, though it was not "his wont," he hinted that we might have some supper at a tavern. The proposition was delightful; I willingly consented, and we left the theatre arm-in-arm. My Mentor proposed a quiet house in Covent Garden. Off we set; and when under the piazzas encountered two gentlemen, who recognized my gallant friend.

"Ha! Bill! How goes it, my tight'um? Anything alive, old boy?"

"What a rattle you are, Jack!—Friend of mine—Mr. Blake, 95th—Lord John Rumble, Sir Francis Bramble;" and in due form, I, a poor lieutenant of Rifles, was presented to these specimens of the English aristocracy.

"Will you join us?" said Colonel Edwards, "we are going to have an oyster or broiled bone quietly at 'The Rainbow.' "

"The Rainbow be d——!" said Lord John: "come, go it, Bill; I say 'The Finish!'"

But my companion sturdily dissented. "No, my Lord. This gentleman," pointing to me, "has never been in London till this evening, and I will never consent to introduce him to a place where the most profligate of both sexes congregate."

"Now, away with this gammon!" rejoined the baronet, "I hate 'The Rainbow!' Come, toddle to the Saloon; that's a slap-up thing! and we'll look in for an hour."

But the colonel was immovable; and Lord John and his companion good-naturedly consented to yield for once, and promised to rejoin us without delay.

There was a *brusquerie* in the manners of both the colonel's friends—a total absence of everything aristocratic, that astounded me. That men of high family should use language decidedly vulgar, and partially unintelligible, was astonishing. Sir Francis was a married man—none in Britain stood higher in public estimation; and would he venture to figure at "The Finish!" I was certainly surprised, and I expressed it to the colonel; of course, with due caution.

He sighed heavily. "Indeed, my young friend, your remarks are just and natural. In the upper classes of society, a consciousness of high station, and the prevailing fashion of the day, have produced an ease of manner bordering upon vulgarity. The coach-box is tenanted by the owner, while the driver sits within. Boxes are the familiar favourites of the nobility. The ring, the stable, and the race-course, are the only schools now; and even senators affect the slang of society, that it is surprising by what contingency they could have ever known.—But here we are;" and as he spoke, we entered a very unpretending coffee-room, and seated ourselves in the most retired box, while the colonel pulled the bell, and ordered supper directly.

"My friends," said the polite commander, "will be here immediately, and I must give you a hint, which I know you will excuse. Persons like Sir Francis and Lord John, when on rambles like the present, sink their titles. They fancy they are unknown;" and the colonel smiled at the absurdity; "but we must gratify this folly, and address them simply by

their sur-names. We will fall into their humour; although, between you and me, the waiter will certainly detect them; and, before we part, penetrate their incognito; ay, and know them as well as you or I."

Almost immediately the friends of Colonel Edwards joined us. I looked at Lord John. He was a common-place sort of a personage, in no way remarkable, but for an immense display of rings, chains, and brooches. "Ay," thought I, "there is the overweening wealth of the English nobility. Still something shows the man." I turned to Sir Francis; and he, indeed, surprised me. He was ungraceful, yeoman-looking. I whispered my disappointment touching his friends to the colonel, while our companions were otherwise employed; but he assured me, that nothing was more likely to lead to a wrong notion of men, than to be influenced by mere manner.

Indeed, notwithstanding his kindness to me, I felt that Sir Francis had sunk immeasurably in my estimation; and I lamented that he should bow to fashion's ordinances, and for a moment descend from his high and palmy state to join in vulgar conviviality. Aylmer had torn away much of the tinsel from high life, but for this *exposé* I was unprepared; and, with disgust, I admitted how faithful the picture of my ruined friend had been, when he described the littleness of nobility. Upon Lord John I looked with pity; he was young, just starting into life, and might reform; but, upon my soul! I regarded Sir Francis with feelings bordering on contempt.

Supper ended, the colonel reminded his friends that there was that night a ballot at Brookes's, at which they were expected to be present. Accordingly, a bill was called for; and I, finding my stock of silver almost exhausted, produced my ten-pound note. The colonel was similarly circumstanced; and when the waiter answered the bell, he handed him a bank-note for change, and returned mine, peremptorily declaring that on this occasion he must be paymaster. I remonstrated to no purpose; he obliged me to pocket my purse, and all I could effect was a compromise, by which it was stipulated, that, on the following night, I should accompany the party to Covent Garden Theatre, and play the host afterward if I pleased.

A coach was called; we embarked; I was set down at Hatchett's, and my companions proceeded to their club.

Here I was, safe and sound in purse and person, my first

night in London over! Was I not, indeed, a fortunate fellow, to form so desirable an acquaintance as Colonel Edwards? I had promised to dine with him next day; and he had assured me that he would call early at Hatchett's, and drive me in his curricle to Greenwood and Cox's. I went to bed; slept soundly; dreamed of dukes, duchesses, countesses, and colonels. There was but one alloy to my happiness, and that was, that my visit was so limited.

I had just finished breakfast, and a hasty persusal of the morning papers, when some trifling articles that I had purchased on the preceding evening in a linen-draper's shop in Bond-street, were sent home. I called the waiter, asked him for change to pay the messenger, and handed him my ten-pound note. He looked at it, and then, as I thought, very suspiciously at me.

"Why this is quite a new one," said he.

"A what?"

"A new one, sir."

"New or old, I presume it's a good one."

"One of the best of the kind I ever saw," replied the waiter.

"Its kind! Why, is it not the Bank of England?"

"No, sir; it's the Bank of Elegance," quoth the attendant.

"Bank of the Devil! What do you mean?"

The waiter bowed, and handed me the note. It was, indeed, what is termed a flash one, being the undertaking of a wig-maker in Bishopsgate-street "to cut hair against any man living, or pay bearer, on demand, at the Bank of Elegance, Fifty Pounds." Dark doubts crossed my mind—Edwards was a swindler, and had exchanged this for my ten-pound note when settling the supper-bill at the Rainbow. At that moment a twopenny-post letter arrived; it was addressed to me by the gallant colonel, and put the point at rest.

"MY DEAR BLAKE,

"You have very probably discovered before now that you are one of the greatest asses in existence."—Very true, but not very flattering.—"Certainly, your friend Aylmer may be proud of his pupil."—I groaned.—"Even my warnings were unheeded, and you let me do you out of ten pounds, and palm upon you, for a couple of the *noblesse*, two as vulgar scoundrels as ever prigged a pocket-handkerchief. You are one of the softest young gentlemen I have had the honour of cleaning out for a long time; therefore, as your stay is limited, don't wait for me to introduce you to Craig's-court; for if you stop at Hatchett's till my curricle arrives, you had better replenish your purse, and obtain an extended leave of absence.

"I beg you not to *debit* me with your gloves, knife, and handkerchief."—Gone they were indeed.—"Lord John grabbed them. You will be sorry to learn that the poor baronet is in quod : he is very unlucky, as it is scarcely a fortnight since he returned from transportation. He made an awkward effort at a watch, and is now under the screw, and I fear, will go for change of air to Brixton.

"Adieu ! my friend. Mention me to Mr. Aylmer when you write to him; and if you profit by my precepts, you will have laid out, ten pounds to excellent advantage. Although I could accomodate you with a score of names, I think last night's will do as well as any. Thine, my dear Blake, very affectionately,

"WILLIAM EDWARDS,

*"Lieut.-Col. 4th Dragoon Guards.*

"P. S. Was it Portman or Berkeley Square where my town-residence was? Faith, I forget which; but I leave the choice to you. Mrs. E. desires her regards. "W. E."

"Tuesday morning, 8 o'clock."

"To John Blake, Esq., 95th Rifles,  
Hatchett's Hotel, Piccadilly."

I folded the colonel's epistle, and laid it aside most carefully ; unlocked my portfolio, and gave the waiter a bank-note ; and having called a coach, drove off to call upon Greenwood and Cox.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### A PROMISED HEIR—CALL AT BAKER-STREET—DEPARTURE.

*Sir Anthony.*—You must make his peace, Mrs. Malaprop ;—you must tell her 'tis Jack's way—tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of the family ! Come away, Jack, ha, ha, ha ! Mrs. Malaprop—a young villain !

*Mrs. M.*—Oh, Sir Anthony !—O fie, captain !

*The Rivals.*

I REACHED Craig's-court as safely, though not so stylishly, as if I had come in the colonel's curricle ; despatched my business, and found myself—no bad thing for a second lieutenant—in strong credit with the agents. Sundry letters were handed to me, and among others, a most voluminous epistle from my uncle Manus. Now, Manus Blake was but an indifferent penman, and to him a letter was a labour. His correspondence rarely exceeded two or three despatches within a twelvemonth,

and therefore, an epistle from him must be momentous. I ordered the coachman to drive me back to Hatchett's, that there I might have full leisure to peruse this important document.

"Castle Blake, April, 1815.

"DEAR JACK,

"Since you sailed for England, I have received a letter from your grandfather, in reply to one of mine, relative to your poor mother's fortune. I thought, now that you had entered into a profession, it was full time to inquire what disposition had been made of five thousand pounds which I understood to have been a legacy from an aunt to my late sister-in-law, and over which Mr. Harrison had no control. Hitherto I forbore to make inquiries, lest it might be imagined that I wished to appropriate any part of your scanty patrimony to your past or present necessities. Mr. H. informs me, and in more polite terms than I expected from him, that you were made a ward of Chancery, and the money has been accumulating for your benefit. This is all right. As your grandfather is at present in London, although he expressed no wish to see you in his letter, I would recommend you to call; may be the lord would soften his heart, and make him do justice to one that never injured him, and that's yourself. He lives at No. 43, Upper Barker or Baker Street.

"You will expect, no doubt, to hear the news of the neighbourhood. Mrs. Donovan has married a colonel somebody, and, we suspect, made but a poor hand of it—(more of that to her! say I,)—for they seem to be hard-up for money, or they would never rack the tenants as they're doing.

"Father Roger has got the parish of Ballybofin. The people were sadly neglected by the old priest, who was bedridden for years. Father Roger has turned over a new leaf with them, and the first Sunday he cursed them out of the face, with bell, book, and candle, to show them that they must look to their souls in future.

"Tony, poor man! broke his leg last Tuesday, by a fall from the switch-tailed mare. It was a great blessing, when he was to break a bone, that it happened the end of the season.

"A set of Ballybooley boys, the other night, took off Sibby McClintock, the schoolmaster's daughter. There is a great hullyabaloo in consequence, but no tidings of her yet. I'm glad she's gone, for your cousin Jack was eternally dropping in. It's not right to put temptation in a young man's way; and as he's in delicate health, his mother won't allow him to be contradicted in any thing.

"I fear he will be obliged to give up the bar entirely, which is a great pity, for he would have cut a figure. He over-read himself so much in college, that the sight of a Latin book gives him a head-ache. He had a nasty short cough when he came down, but it is leaving him fast; and he tallied the fox we found in Carrintubber, last Friday, as clear as a bell: his lungs, therefore, are not affected, which is a great comfort, although the surgeon-general was a little apprehensive about them at one time.

"Denis Corcoran burned powder for the first time, last week, in a field near Ballinasloe. It is allowed on all hands that he behaved prettily, and hit his man the second shot. One is interested naturally for a friend's child, and indeed, I always thought that Denis was a promising boy.

"Your aunt is pretty well, and preparing for the jubilee.\* She misses father Roger much, for he was of great service to her in private. He is looking out for a smart coadjutor to serve the parish, and then he will return, as usual, to manage your aunt's concerns in Castle Blake.

"Poor Darby Moran—and a decent boy he was—him you may remember that they called 'Darby Dhu' (black), was hanged last Monday for shooting at a peeler.† It was hard enough upon him, as he only lamed the fellow for life. As he was a tenant's son, your aunt, out of respect, sent the maids upon the jaunting-car to attend the execution. He died real game, and pleased the priest greatly in religion before he came out upon the drop. We gave him a good wake and fine funeral.

"Dr. Stringer was fired at, in mistake, when leaving Mount Kirwan after dinner: they shot his horse dead; and when they discovered that he was the wrong man, made him an ample apology. They took him, in the dark, for parson Milligan, and he rode a grey cob, and had on a black cotamore.‡

"Your aunt is very uneasy at your being ordered abroad, and fears some accident will happen, as she has had bad dreams. Indeed, my dear Jack, you must look sharp. Foreign parts, they say, are dangerous. I wish to God you were in a quiet safe country like Galway; but we can't have everything as we want it.

\* A religious festival held in Ireland at stated times, for making of marriages and remission of sins.

† *Anglice*, a policeman.

‡ *Anglice*, a great-coat.

"I have written this post to my old friend Mortimer, and desired him to give you a case of his best pistols, and send the bill to me. I would recommend you to have them saw-handled, with a finger-crook upon the trigger-guard, for it steadies the hand wonderfully. Be sure you choose a small bore and a weighty barrel. I would have sent you my own, but your cousin is growing up. He will soon be on the grand jury, and some devil will be apt to plaster a quarrel on him; or somebody might tramp on my own corns, so it is better for us to keep the tools we are accustomed to.

"Father Roger is breaking fast, and you'll be sorry to hear it. You remember what a head he had. Two bottles of port now make him talk thick, and the third smothers him totally. More's the pity! a better Christian never cursed a flock; and, as a companion—one might drink with him in the dark, and ask no questions!

"Denis O'Brien sends his blessing, and desires me to say that he is rearing two pups of the tanned setter. And with mine, your aunt's, and your cousin's love, believe me,

"Dear Jack,  
"Ever your affectionate uncle,  
"MANUS BLAKE."

"P. S. A letter by some mistake came here, directed to you, from a Miss Lightbody of Dublin; and, unfortunately, it fell into your aunt's hands. The best of the sex are curious, and she read it every word. Indeed, poor woman! she's over-religious, and of course, was greatly distressed. I told her, young men would be young men to the end of the chapter. You know, Jack, I am not too tight-laced, but the less you have to do with such gentlewomen the better. It appears by her account, that I am likely to become a grand-uncle. Well, it can't be helped: and you may make your mind easy, for your little one shall be protected. I directed your cousin Jack to write to the lady; it will come better from him, and I'll pretend to know nothing of the thing. But take my advice, and avoid such scrapes in future. Jack tells me he thinks he saw her once, and that she is very good-looking. Don't take any notice of this when writing to your aunt, for she is to know nothing of the business.

"It seems also, by Miss Lightbody's epistle, that they have nick-named you 'Jack the Devil.' I suspect this appellation was earned by many a wild prank. My Jack, it would appear, was termed *Sober-sides*; but, as I tell his mother, had

his health been as good as your's, he might have been as wild as yourself.

"Your's, M. B."

"N. B. As you may be out of the country, if it is a boy, I'll have it called after your poor father; but if a girl, I think it should be named after your aunt. She'll expect the compliment; and, indeed, from her affection towards you, she deserves it."

Was there ever such consummate assurance as my worthy cousin's? To transfer to me not only his flattering *sobriquet*, but the honours of paternity that awaited him! And yet, I could not but laugh at this simplicity of my uncle, whom it was evident that Jack had duped egregiously. I felt half inclined to undeceive him. If it answered no other purpose it might alter the patronymic of the expected heir. But, as my aunt was preparing for the jubilee, a discovery of Jack's iniquities might interrupt the holy tranquillity of her mind, so very requisite at this important period, when sins were lopped off by the dozen, and an immunity granted to all good Catholics to commence a new score.

Young as I was, I saw the necessity of attending to my uncle's advice, and calling upon my grandfather. I prepared for the interview, and drove off to Baker-street. The coach stopped at the right number; and for once in his life, Manus Blake was correct in figures. The coachman knocked, the door opened, the steps fell, I jumped from the vehicle, and to a very pretty-looking woman verging upon the middle-age, I handed my card. She read it, placed her hands across her eyes, examined my features for a moment, and then, with a half scream, closed the hall door, and requested me to follow her. She led the way into a front drawing-room, very expensively furnished, and, by the presence of a harp, piano, and guitar, bearing evidence of female occupation.

"Gracious God! how like his father!" was her first remark; "I wish, boy, you had been liker your mother; it would have served you better."

I was astonished.

"Why did you not call yesterday?" she continued; "your grandfather and Miss Emily left town this morning, on a short excursion; and from the old gentleman's declining health, God knows how soon he may go off!—Aye, the same eyes, same hair, same look, and, I fear, the same recklessness—all—all like his father. You must follow them, sir. They will reach Brighton on Monday; there you must meet them."

I stared at her. " You seem to know me, and to have known my parents!"

" Yes," she replied, " I knew and loved them—I mean your mother. Alas! I was the chief cause of that disastrous union; for I assisted your gallant but imprudent father to carry off Miss Harrison. Is there a servant of the colonel's living? his name O'Brien?"

" Denis O'Brien is stout and hearty."

" Does he ever speak of his master?" said the female.

" Eternally," I answered.

" Does he ever mention the innkeeper's daughter? her who assisted in that wild adventure. Names he a person called Phœbe?"

" Indeed he does: or, as he terms it, '*Phaybay*!'"

She laughed. " Ay, just so; I think now I listen to his 'Phaybay, jewel.' And what do they call you? Cæsar, I suppose."

" No, I am, unfortunately, called after my grandfather—John."

" Unfortunately! I am glad of it," she said; " my heart bounded when you alighted from the coach; and, but your years are fewer, I could have fancied it was the poor colonel on the well remembered night he stopped at the Red Lion in Stainsbury. You will go to Brighton, won't you?"

" Impossible! I leave town to-morrow; my regiment is in the Netherlands, and my leave expired."

" Alas! like your father in everything! And you are a soldier, too. How determined fortune seems to part you from your natural protector! You must write to Mr. Harrison, however. At times his heart softens when he thinks of Miss Ellen's hapless fate. There is her portrait," and she pointed to a half-length painting covered with a silken curtain; " it is kept veiled as you see; but, in secret, your grandfather draws the silk aside, and looks at it for hours. I have ascertained this frequently."

As she spoke, she jumped upon a chair, and uncovered my mother's portrait. It was the likeness of a beautiful girl in the very dawning of womanhood. I gazed on it with deep interest. There was uncommon loveliness in the features, whose character was a softness touching upon melancholy. I became sensibly affected; tears stole down my cheeks; I heard sobs beside me, and on turning round saw Phœbe weeping bitterly. I took her hand and placed her on the sofa. " Come, Phœbe, this is foolish in us both; tell me 'ho Miss Emily is?'"

My mother's confidante wiped away her tears with the corner of her apron.

"And do you ask this question? Are you so ignorant of your grandfather as not to know that she is his adopted child, his intended heiress? But, as all correspondence has ceased for years, I suppose you are a stranger to all this. Well, I need not tell you how severely your mother's marriage wounded her father's pride, and how bitterly he resented it. While writhing under what he called a child's desertion, chance made him acquainted with a very amiable lady of good family in Gloucestershire. He addressed and married her; in due time she gave promise of an heir, and her husband was overjoyed. But this happiness was brief; news of the tragic fate of Colonel Blake, and the untimely death of his lovely wife, stung Mr. Harrison to the soul. In secret, he felt his own cruelty to the deceased, and longed for some opening that would allow him to offer his protection to the orphan grandchild. At last he conquered his own pride, and wrote to your uncle; and instead of a pacific reply, received a letter offensive in its language, and ending with a challenge."

I started—"Was ever such madness? a challenge!"

"Yes, indeed; madness you may well call it. Of course, with that letter all communication between the parties ceased.

"Meanwhile, Mrs. Harrison's accouchement was approaching, and a house was engaged in town, that she might be placed under the immediate care of the first physicians. The hour came—her husband's hopes were blasted—she died in giving birth to a still-born babe!

"The deceased lady had an only sister, who had lost her husband, a captain in the navy, a few months before. As Mrs. Clifden's confinement drew near, Mrs. Harrison, who was deeply attached to her widowed sister, invited her to Stainsbury Park. There she gave birth to a girl, but never herself recovered. It was believed that this circumstance had preyed upon Mrs. Harrison heavily, and in a great degree produced her death. She thought and spoke of Mrs. Clifden incessantly; adopted her child—and, when dying, confided it to your grandfather's protection, after receiving a solemn assurance that he would be a parent to the orphan. That promise Mr. Harrison rigidly fulfilled. The child was brought home—he watched her from the cradle—gradually he grew more and more attached to the deserted infant, and the little Emily became to him a cherished pledge—a darling daughter. She is now nearly sixteen, beautiful as innocent. But you shall judge for

yourself; and Phoebe led me to the mantelpiece, over which a miniature of Miss Clifden was suspended. It was the likeness of a very lovely girl; the expression of the countenance combining sweetness with intelligence.

"Indeed, Phoebe," I said, "this is a charming picture. Has not the artist flattered Miss Clifden?"

"Far from it. More beautiful faces than her's I have certainly seen, but I never saw one that interests so much. That miniature was painted when Miss Emily was a year younger; she is of course more womanly now, but still the likeness is most striking."

"And is this fair girl as accomplished as she is pretty, Phœbe?"

"Her teachers say so," she replied. "These are her drawings;" and she opened a portfolio, containing many very elegant pencil sketches. "She plays delightfully, and she has been taught to dance by the first artist at the opera. But this accomplishment she has never practised but with her master; for Mr. Harrison's health and habits preclude her from entering into society, even were she old enough to go out. In truth, there is not a girl in England more secluded."

"I wish I had seen her."

"I wish sincerely that you had," said Phoebe. "But where would be the advantage? yet, when you are some years older, I would give this hand to see you and Miss Emily married."

I laughed. "Why, Phœbe, I thought you had had enough of match-making."

"H-eigho! I have been an unlucky agent to others, and most unfortunate in my own union," and she pointed to a wedding and mourning ring upon her fingers.

"Then you have been married, Phœbe?"

"Yes," she replied, "I suppose it was the evil influence of example; for soon after your father eloped with Miss Harrison, I took it into my head to run away with a sergeant of dragoons. He was a handsome good-humoured fellow, and I an only child. My mother purchased his discharge—in due time we were forgiven and brought home—and in three years, Jenkins, by the death of my parents, became owner of the inn. His habits were indolent and jovial; and when all control was removed, they unfortunately became dissipated. I strove to reclaim him, and kept our property together pretty well, until, in an hour of inebriety, he was mad enough to become security for an insolvent tradesman; and before I even apprehended danger, we were utterly ruined, and the earnings of my

father's life swept away to discharge the debts of a rogue. He saw his folly when too late to remedy it, and died, poor fellow ! a broken-hearted man. I, being fortunately without incumbrance, was taken into Mr. Garrison's household. There I have remained since, and there I am likely to continue."

"No," said I, "not if your quondom admirer Mr. O'Brien knew that his 'Phaybay darlin' was disengaged."

She smiled, and rallied me again about Miss Clifden. "Well, Phœbe, when the wars are over, I will come here and make my suit. Will you assist me?"

"Indeed I will," she replied with a smile.

"Give me then, that picture, that I may know my Dulcinea, should I by any chance meet her."

She shook her head. "I dare not. But come you shall have a token of my pretty mistress," and, opening a pocket-book, she gave me a ringlet of auburn hair.

"I got it from Miss Emily the night before I left, and little did she know that I should so soon transfer her favour to another. But she speaks of you often, calls you cousin, and wonders if you are as handsome as I describe the poor colonel to have been."

"Well, well, Phœbe, you will make a favourable report. I leave town in the mail to-morrow evening for embarkation, but, I'll visit you in the forenoon."

"You will find me at home; though, faith, young gentleman, I risk my reputation by admitting so gay a gallant in the absence of the family;" and, with a woman's vanity, she arranged a stray side-curl in the chimney-glass. When parting in the hall, of course I kissed my mother's confidante.

"Now deuce take you for a saucy boy. But it is hard to blame him; the fault is a family one. His poor father never commenced or concluded a conversation without committing a similar impertinence!"

I made my peace next day with Phœbe; and some small memorials of my mother that I forced her to accept, with a few trifles from myself, cemented our friendship. We parted —she in tears, and I more affected than I shall now acknowledge; for Phœbe appeared the only connecting link remaining between my lamented parents and myself.

On the third evening I left London, had a fine passage to Ostend, and reached head-quarters at Brussels on the 23d of April.

I need only say that the probationary course of drill was

speedily got over; letters of introduction procured me attention from the commanding officers, and I made some very desirable private acquaintances in my own corps. I took lessons in French and fencing—purchased a horse—rode about the city and immediate neighbourhood—found Brussels a delightful residence for a young soldier—and while days rose big with the fate of empires, mine slipped lightly away, and the middle of June found me entirely engrossed in learning the rudiments of love, war, and the German flute.

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### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### QUATRE BRAS AND WATERLOO.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,  
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,  
The midnight brought the signal sound of strife,  
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day  
Battle's magnificently-stern array!  
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent,  
The earth is covered thick with other clay,  
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,  
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent.  
*Childe Harold.*

ON Thursday, the 15th of June, the sun rose gaily on fair Brussels. Without, war was on the wing—within, there was joy and festivity; and yet, strange contrast! some were preparing for the field, while others were dressing for the ball-room. Courier after courier brought vague reports of hostile demonstrations on the frontier. Blucher was in constant communication with Wellington, and all were ready for marching at a moment's notice, so soon as Napoleon developed his plans sufficiently, to show us upon what point the storm of battle would descend.

In the evening, the Prince of Orange reached the gay city, and rode into the Duke's court-yard, and he bore certain tidings of Bonaparte's advance. The Prussian general, Muffling, soon after confirmed the news; and Picton, who had but that morning arrived from England, remained with his military colleagues, discussing over their wine at the Duke's table the probable opening of a campaign, whose close, short as it was, he was not fated to witness.

Night came—

" And Belgium's capital had gathered there,  
Her beauty and her chivalry."

Surrounded by a brilliant circle at the Duchess of Richmond's ball, Wellington received a second despatch from Blucher. The moment for action was come, and the intelligence was decisive. Napoleon had crossed the Sambre in force, and was marching rapidly on Charleroi and Fleurus.

While reading the Marshal's communication, the English commander became wholly absorbed in thought, and his air was grave and contemplative. As if forgetful that he was in a crowded room, he muttered some sentences, in which Blucher's name was audible. Then, with characteristic rapidity, his resolution was formed, his orders quietly issued to his staff, and again he joined the gay group with whom he had been engaged when the momentous intelligence of Bonaparte's advance was delivered.

While orders were hastily despatched, directing the British brigades to break up from their respective cantonments, and advance by rapid marches upon Nivelles, the *corps-d'armée* in Brussels was ordered to march by the Wood of Soignes, upon the great road to Charleroi. Thus it was intended that the whole force should unite as it approximated to the scene of action, while the Belgian capital should be covered from any effort of Napoleon, and the communication with the Prussians maintained, by the English left forming a junction with Blucher's right.

It was a moment of painful and engrossing interest, when the "turn out" of the bugle was returned by the rolling of the "beat to arms." The great city was buried in repose. The soldier was sleeping in his quarters—the burgher dreaming of to-morrow's business—while in that gay crowd where he who was to direct the storm of war still lingered, "an hundred hearts beat happily," that before another sun would set, were doomed to mourn over friendships dissolved by death, and fairy visions of love's formation, alas! too bright and beautiful to be realised.

I was asleep—but the excitement and uncertainty of the last evening had rendered mine but uneasy slumbers, and I was teased with irritating dreams. One while, I was about to fight O'Moore across the mess-table—at another, mother Daly upbraided me with broken vows, and brandished in her hand an attorney's letter, in which the pains and penalties of breach of promise were awfully denounced. Again, with

the inconsistency of a dreamer, I found myself before the Old Bailey to witness the execution of my friend Sir Francis, for street robbery; and, while waiting for the baronet's last appearance upon any stage, I felt a pluck at my watch-chain, and detected Lord John in the very act of borrowing my repeater. I was lustily shouting for an officer, when the sharp and sustained rattle of a brass drum beneath my window, dispelled these "troublous dreams." I jumped out of bed, and commenced collecting my habiliments, just as the piper-major of the Seventy-ninth struck up "a gathering" that would have started the seven sleepers, and convulsed any one but an admirer of Paganini.

Brussels was speedily in an uproar—soldiers hurried to their alarm-posts, and citizens peeped from their windows, or issued from the house to ascertain the causes of this general commotion. The streets were crowded to excess, as from every quarter of the city, cavalry, artillery and field equipages collected. The whole of the divisions were speedily ready for marching, and the infantry defiling by regiments, had already taken the road through the Wood of Soignes. By seven all was over; the troops were gone—the streets deserted—for those who, four hours before were figuring at the ball, were now advancing upon Quatre Bras, directed by that harbinger of blood, "the cannon's opening roar."

As our's was a light, consequently it was a leading regiment. Every mile brought us nearer to the conflict. The distant and hollow booming of the guns changed to a lively cannonade, intermingled with the sharp and continued roll of musketry. Other tokens of "a foughten field" were not wanting; tumbrils and country-carts filled with wounded men passed us in quick succession, while many a poor fellow was stretched upon the road, where he had expired in a vain effort too seek assistance in the rear.

We had marched more than twenty miles before we reached Quatre-Bras, where the Prince of Orange had been hotly engaged since morning, and obliged to yield ground he could hold no longer, but every inch of which he had most gallantly contested. The battle was raging. To the right, the left, and before us, cannon and musketry were heard. There was small time for observation, for as they came up, each regiment deployed and took its ground. Nor was this easily done; favoured by the immense rye crop, the French cavalry rushed on them before they formed. In some instances the Lancers charged with partial success—but generally they

received a shattering volley that sent them to the right about, or found the British in square, which, while its ridge of steel was impassable to every effort, threw in volley after volley so close and murderous, that before its ceaseless storm, man and horse went down in hundreds.

On the right of our position, the Bois de Bossu had been occupied by a Belgian corps; but they had been driven in, and the French occupied it in force. This wood was of paramount importance, and it must be recovered—for under its cover, the French could suddenly debouche and seize the Brussels road. The Rifles were ordered to retake it, and in a few minutes we were hotly engaged with the French light infantry.

It was a beautiful affair. Where the wood was thick we availed ourselves of the cover, and, extending from tree to tree, pressed the Tirailleurs sharply. The rifle did excellent service, and gradually the French lost ground, till we reached the extremity of the wood, when we formed, fixed swords, and pushed the enemy fairly across the ravine beyond it. But, once debouched, a storm of grape saluted us; immediately the cavalry charged; and we were driven for shelter to the trees. Fresh light troops entered the wood—skirmishing recommenced; Gradually pressed by numbers, we in our turn were forced back, and after a fierce and sanguinary struggle, once more the French light infantry possessed the Bois de Bossu.

At that critical moment, General Maitland and the Guards arrived after a fifteen hours' march, and the Duke ordered them to support us, and attack the wood instantly. Wearied, but with unbroken spirits, on they went. Another affair ensued, and for three hours the Bois de Bossu was furiously contested. At last the French abandoned it altogether—night ended the combat—Ney fell back on Frasnes—and we bivouacked on the ground, which we had regained with such loss of life. Fatigued and hungry, I threw myself underneath a tree and slept soundly till morning dawned.

The sun rose gloomily, the rain fell fast, and everything foretold a coming tempest. I made my first and only meal that day on a crust or two of stale bread, with a flask of excellent brandy, which my servant had found in the haversack of a dead voltigeur. It was indeed a fortunate discovery; and I shared it with a brave companion, who, though wounded severely, was too gallant to go to the rear. Most of the brigades had joined us over night, and momentarily

we expected battle. But Blucher had fallen back, and a corresponding movement was necessary on the part of Wellington. It was done; we retired by Genappe; and after a masterly retreat, marked by some slight affairs of cavalry, we halted on the night of the seventeenth upon the ridge of Waterloo.

The march had been very distressing; bad weather, execrable roads, and short rations, were discouraging enough after one sanguinary conflict, and preparatory to another and a deadlier one to-morrow. But we were formed of stubborn materials; the elements themselves could not subdue our resolution, which even amid pain, fatigue, and hunger, proved itself indomitable.

The night continued stormy; it thundered and lightened, and the rain fell in torrents. With difficulty the fires were lighted, and kept up from the supplies that the neighbouring forest yielded. At last the eighteenth dawned. Gloomily the morning rose; but with the first light we were busily engaged. The arms were dried—the rations, scanty and bad, discussed—the positions of regiments marked or corrected, till at eleven the sun shone out, and soon after, under a storm of artillery, Jerome Bonaparte advanced on Hougoumont, and Waterloo, glorious Waterloo, commenced!

We were pushed forward in front of the fifth division, occasionally fighting in extended order, as we lined the ravine in front of the position, or, when threatened with a charge of cavalry, uniting and forming square, like the rest of the infantry. The regiments composing Picton's division were stationed in the left centre, behind a broken hedge, which, although it partially masked the position, from its numerous openings allowed sufficient room for cavalry to charge. Some Belgian light troops, posted in front, were driven in about two o'clock, and told that the storm that had been raging on the right of the line, was now about to be directed against the left centre.

We were skirmishing in extended order along the crest of the ravine, between our own troops and the French masses, when a furious cannonade announced the coming tempest, and falling back, we formed on the flank of a Highland regiment. D'Erlon's corps ascended the ridge—his infantry in close column, while the cavalry galloped down the face of the position, or rode in between the squares, to discover if any of the British regiments had been shaken by the fire of the artillery. A body of Cuirassiers furiously attacked the

Highlanders on our left. But the square was perfect, and its musketry opened with such sustained precision that the horsemen were forced to recoil. In their retreat, they passed us within thirty paces, and we had reserved our fire. Although they rode off at speed, and to clear the face of our square was but the work of a minute, yet they went down by dozens, and a line of men and horses stretched along the rye, showed that few triggers of the Ninety-fifth had been idly drawn.

While the broken cavalry rode over the ridge, only to form again and renew their desperate efforts, the French masses advanced boldly to the hedge, and at the same moment, "the fighting Fifth" deployed at the other side, came on to meet them, and the muskets of the rival infantry almost touched each other. At that moment Picton gave the word to charge—instantly, Kemp's brigade cleared the fence—Pack's rushed forward to support it—and the French, instead of being assailants, found themselves assailed. They delivered one well-directed volley, and commenced retiring in perfect order. But our blood was roused; the Fifth pressed forward with the bayonet, and the French feebly resisted, fell in hundreds, and a series of murderous combats followed. The infantry were driven across the ridge; and the cavalry who came to their relief, charged in line with the bayonet, and forced over the ravine with prodigious loss. Picton fell while executing this brilliant charge. For an hour this sanguinary conflict raged, till the plateau in front of the position was totally abandoned by the French, who left three thousand bodies on the ground.

A lull succeeded; but it was only till fresh troops could be brought forward. It was five o'clock; the French batteries were reinforced and advanced, and opening a sweeping fire of grape, prepared us for another effort. Again we formed square: but, alas! two hours had diminished it sadly. We had lost all our field officers; the captains were *hors de combat*; and a junior commanded the regiment. The storm of grape continued, and the men fell fast. A regiment of Cuirassiers appeared in front, while a body of red lancers of the guard threatened us in flank and rear. This was a trying moment, and hearts beat fast, but not from fear. Our swords were screwed on, the face of the square corrected, and while shells exploded and shot hailed upon us to cover the advance of the cavalry, the Ninety-fifth remained firm, calm, and determined.

On they came! "fierce as the bursting thunder-cloud;" but they found us ready to receive them. Our front rank presented an unbroken line of glittering sword-blades, while the rear poured over the heads of their kneeling comrades a continued stream of fire, that—for every bullet found its mark—brought the assailants to the earth in dozens. Unable to endure this withering fusilade, at length they turned and went off. Up rose the front rank, and threw in their reserved fire; and that parting volley searched many a back-piece, and sent many a charger across the hill with empty saddle.

It was then that Wellington and his staff rode up, and his quick eye discovering that most of the officers were fallen, himself gave the word—"Well done, Ninety-fifth! Unfix swords; left face; extend again; and we shall drive these rascals across the hill." No more was wanted; we cheered, broke into skirmishing order, spread over the rising ground, and kept up an independent fire, wherever a group or officer was seen whom a rifle-ball would reach.

We were curiously posted; the crests of the respective hills occupied by the conflicting hosts were considerably higher than the broken ground on which we were extended; and, as the cannonade was furious on either side, the hissing of the "iron shower" that swept but a few feet over us, was anything but agreeable. We lay about one hundred and fifty paces in front of the British position, and commanded a more extensive view of the hostile operations than any of the regiments in line. Wherever the wreaths of dense smoke allowed the eye to penetrate, the field of battle exhibited a scene of boundless devastation. Dismounted guns, and ruined equipages of all descriptions, were strewn everywhere about. The height of the rye generally concealed the carcasses of the slain, but other and certain tokens pointed out the many that had already fallen. Troops of horses without riders were careering along the ridge; some with astonishing sagacity remained with their companions imitated their movements, and accompanied the regiment when it charged, and followed it when retreating; others fed quietly in the valley that lay between the combatants, and, undismayed by the thunder of five hundred cannon, obeying animal instinct, cropped the tall grain, to all appearance as undisturbed as when picketed before the battle commenced.

The sun was descending rapidly, when our attention was directed toward Fischermont by a loud and irregular cannonade. It was evident that fresh troops were coming into action; but whose were they? Grouchy or Blucher had ar-

rived—and which? That was a momentous question. This uncertainty was short; the cannonade upon the left became louder and more continued, and our batteries were advanced near to the ridge, where the British line, for the last half hour, had been gradually converging.

It was evident that a mighty movement was preparing by the enemy; columns were seen forming, and a new and furious effort was about to be made. Three grand attacks, each in itself a battle, had failed—and night and Blucher were approaching.

It was seven o'clock—the Prussians had come up in force, and the French right began to retrograde. The fate of the day was hurrying to its crisis—Napoleon's fortune was on "a die"—and he well knew that by a desperate essay alone he could turn a fight which every moment was becoming less doubtful. The Imperial Guard was therefore formed for attack, and Ney, "the child of victory," ordered to lead it on.

Wellington also, had marked the crisis; and the English Guards were advanced to the brow of the ridge, formed four deep, and ordered to lie down to avoid the cannonade, until the moment for action came. Vandeleur's and Vivian's brigades of light cavalry were brought from the left to support the intended effort of the centre; while, covered by a storm of artillery, the Imperial Guards mounted the height in close column.

Although the fire of the British batteries mowed them down, at cannister-range, and the converged fusilade of the right wing was "fast and furious," this splendid soldiery undauntedly came on, with the war-cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" They crossed the ridge—and then the household troops of England rose in vengeance, cheered, and rushed forward with the bayonet. The Duke, who had watched the moment, rode up, ordered us to fix swords, and united with the Forty-second, led us on in person. Ours was a flanking movement, while the Guards drove Ney back in front. They pressed the French across the height. While we rushed forward to support them. A tirailleur battalion threw itself across us; but we swept it from our path—our sword-blades met the French bayonets, and on the other flank, in galloped our light cavalry. Sabred and bayoneted on every side, the middle guard became a mob. Some battalions of the Old, gallantly but vainly, endeavoured, by forming square, to cover the rout of their companions; but the charge was irresistible.

—all went down before it—and a massacre, and not a fight, succeeded.

I had hitherto escaped with but two trifling scratches. Hurried on by the frenzy of the scene, and the hotness of young blood on a “first field,” I quickly found myself in the thickest of the *mélée*, where sabre and bayonet were the only weapons employed. The artillery (our own) had ceased firing—for we were all intermingled, and fighting hand to hand. A grizzled grenadier of the Old Guard, with two orders on his breast, made a full lunge at me, and I felt the bayonet glancing along my ribs. I returned it with a sheer sabre-cut, which brought the veteran to his knees. An Irish guardsman—for he swore awfully in the sweet and euphonious language of “my native land”—beat out his brains with a clubbed musket. I cut down a stray tirailleur pretty cleverly—and next moment was felled to the ground. A dozen English hussars rode over me—a stream of blood obscured my sight—I felt a few knocks like the kick of a charger—became insensible and lay among the dead and dying, as the last glint of sunshine faded on the field of battle.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

The infinites of agony,  
Which meet the gaze, whate'er it might regard—  
The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white eye  
Turned back within its socket : these reward  
Your rank and file by thousands, while the rest  
May win perhaps a ribbon at the breast.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,  
Although he fleeced the *dead* of every nation,  
For into a prime minister but change  
His title, and 'tis nothing but taxation ;  
But he, more modest, took an humbler range  
Of life, and eke an honester vocation.

*Don Juan.*

WATERLOO was won ; the sun set upon a scene of slaughter, and the stillness of death succeeded the roar of battle. The thunder of four hundred cannon—the roll of musketry—the shock of mail-clad horsemen—the Highland slogan—the *Irish huzza*, were heard no more ; and the moon gleamed

coldly on a field of death, whose silence was only broken by the groans of the wounded, as they lay in helpless wretchedness beside their dead companions.

While many a sufferer listened to every sound in anxious expectation of relief, a dropping fire was occasionally heard in the direction of Genappe, announcing that the broken army of Napoleon was fiercely followed by its conquerors.

Wearied by the unparalleled exertions of the tremendous day of Waterloo, the British pursuit gradually relaxed, and the light cavalry halted on the road to Quartre-Bras; but the Prussians, less fatigued, continued to harrass the flying enemy, and the mingled mass of fugitives were forced from every village where they had attempted to form bivouacks. A barrier was hastily thrown across the entrance of Genappe, to arrest the progress of the yagers and hussars that hung upon the rear of the guard; but it was blown down by a few discharges of a howitzer, and the French were driven from the town. Throughout the disastrous night, not a moment of repose was granted to the terror-stricken multitude. To attempt anything like serious resistance to their pursuers, where all were inextricably confused, was absurd. Officers and soldiers were mobbed together; discipline had ended; none attempted to direct where none were found to obey; and with unrelenting fury the Prussian cavalry sabred the exhausted fugitives, till, after passing Gossilies and Charleroi, the wreck of Napoleon's army found a temporary shelter beneath the walls of Philippeville.

That night, the British bivouack was close to the same ridge which their beaten enemy had occupied on the preceding one; and as I lay upon the ground, I heard at times, and at no great distance from me, the voice of my more fortunate companions who had "escaped from the slaughter," and were roaming over the field in search of plunder. Momentarily, I expected that some friendly straggler would pass by. I must have been for a considerable period insensible, for the place where I fell, although the theatre of the final struggle between the relics of Ney's division and the British Guards and cavalry, was now totally deserted by the living, and cumbered only with the dying and dead.

I seemed as if awakening from a dream; a difficulty of respiration painfully annoyed me, and I endeavoured to rise; but a weight too mighty to be removed pressed me to the earth. My sight was imperfect, my eyelids felt closed. I disengaged my left-hand, and raising it to my face, found

that a mask of congealed blood covered it. I rubbed it away, and, prepared as I was for a sanguinary spectacle by the tortuous moanings of wounded men and dying horses, I closed my eyes in horror, when the clear cold moonlight revealed the sickening scene.

Directly over me, and in the very attitude in which he had groaned his last, an officer of the middle guard was stretched—our faces were nearly touching, and his open eyes had fixed their glassy stare on mine. A sword-cut had divided his upper lip, and exposing the teeth, gave to the dead man's countenance a grin so horrible and ghastly, that I who had witnessed death in every form, was glad to avert my eyes. I made a desperate effort to shake him off; but a horse's neck rested on my legs, and my feeble exertions were quite unequal to rid me of this double load.

While suffering great inconvenience of position, I felt the cold intense, and thirst intolerable. No relief was attainable; the groans of the dying were unheard, and I sullenly submitted to my fate. But morning must soon break, and then probably I should be succoured. Could I but disengage myself from the dead man who oppressed me almost to suffocation, I might endure pain, cold, and thirst. I made another effort—it failed—and in despair I laid my head upon the ground, moistened with my own blood and that of my departed enemy. Just then a voice immediately beside me, uttered a feeble supplication for some water. I turned my head, and saw a young ensign, whose leg had been shattered by the wheels of a gun, raise himself upon his elbow, and look across the field, in hope of discovering some one who would relieve him. Nor were his cries unheard; a man dressed in the dark uniform of a Prussian yager, and armed with the short sword which rifle-troops carry, approached the sufferer; but, alas! his was not the errand of mercy. Seizing the wounded man rudely, and deaf to his entreaties, he commenced his work of plunder. I heard the chinking of a purse, and a trinket, a watch, or locket glittered in the moonlight, as he tore it from the bosom of the prostrate soldier.

"Oh, no, no, I cannot, will not part with that!" a low and weak voice muttered; "it was my mother's dying gift—I will never part with it." A struggle ensued, but it was a short one: as the ruffian, irritated at resistance, raised himself, and with one home-thrust silenced the poor youth for ever. Great God! that such a scene of death should be increased by the hand of murder!

I grew sick—I feared to breathe—my death was to be the next, for he had quickly plundered the body of his victim, and turned to the dead guardsman who lay across my breast. Suddenly he stopped, listened, and gazed suspiciously around; then sank down behind a horse, and stretched himself upon the field.

My heart beat again. Two men came forward, and they too were plundering. But, surely, all could not be so ruthless as the crouching wretch beside me? Nearer and nearer they approached—and, sounds of joy! they conversed in my native tongue. I listened with exquisite delight, and never did human voices appear so sweet as theirs! They were grenadiers of the line, and one of them wore a sergeant's stripes. Without a moment's hesitation I addressed them; and an appeal in their native language was not disregarded. I was promptly answered in kindly tones; and while one caught the defunct Frenchman by the collar and flung him aside, his comrade extricated my legs from the dead charger, and assisted me to rise up.

I found myself in the centre of a heap of corpses; to take a second step without treading on a body was impossible; yet I scarce regarded the scene of slaughter—my eyes were riveted upon one corpse, that of the poor lad whom the crouching yager had so brutally murdered.

I stood up with difficulty—a faintness overpowered me—I staggered, and would have fallen, but the serjeant supported me, while his comrade held a canteen to my mouth. It contained brandy diluted with water, and, to one parched as I was, the draught was exquisitely grateful. My deliverers appeared anxious to move off, either to obtain fresh plunder or secure that already acquired; which, to judge from the size of their havresacs, must have been considerable. I begged them to assist me from the field; but they declined it, alleging that they must join their regiment before day-break. At this moment my eyes encountered those of the yager, who lay as motionless behind the dead horse as any of the corpses that surrounded him. If I remained—and I could not walk without support—the chances were immense that the villain would speedily remove one who had witnessed a deed of robbery and murder, and I made a fresh appeal to my worthy countrymen.

"Sergeant, I will reward you handsomely—do not desert me."

"I cannot remain longer, sir: morning is breaking, and

you will soon have relief enough," was the reply.

"It will never reach me: there is one within three paces, who will not permit me to look upon another sun."

Both soldiers started.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the sergeant eagerly.

"Mark you that Prussian sharp-shooter, who skulks behind the horse?"

"What of him?" asked the grenadier.

"Yonder dead officer supplicated assistance from that scoundrel, and he answered him with curses, and commenced plundering him directly. I saw him take a purse, and tear away his epaulette. Some other article the poor fellow feebly attempting to retain; and the yager, before my eyes, stabbed him to the heart. Hearing your approach, he flung himself behind that charger; need I add that there he lies until you leave this spot, and I shall most probably be his next victim?"

"You shall not, by heaven!" exclaimed the soldier, as he drew his sword and stepped over the dead horse. The Prussian, who had no doubt watched the conference attentively, sprang upon his feet on the first movement of the sergeant: but his fate was sealed: before the soldier's comrade could unsheathe his bayonet, the yager was cut down, and the murderer rolled in the agonies of death beside the unfortunate youth, whom but a few minutes before he had so ruthlessly slaughtered.

The corpse was speedily plundered by the grenadiers, and the spoil of the rifleman, when united to their booty, made as I suspect, a valuable addition.

The moonlight was now yielding to the grey tint of early day, and the chief cause of my apprehensions being removed, by the yager's death, I found leisure to scrutinize my deliverers.

The first was a very powerful and athletic man, whose years might be set down at forty: his vigorous frame was perfectly unbroken, and his look bespoke a daring and unhesitating resolution. Indeed, his whole appearance was much above his rank: he seemed a war-worn, dissipated soldier; to him a field of battle was no novelty; and the perfect *nonchalance* with which he despatched the Prussian, betrayed a recklessness regarding human life rather befitting a bandit than a soldier.

His companion, a very young man, was a fine strapping *flanker*, and in everything appeared to be wholly governed

by the will of his comrade. He touched the dead, I thought, with some repugnance, and seemed of gentler heart and milkier disposition than might be expected in a midnight plunderer upon a battle-field.

"See, the dawn breaks rapidly," said the non-commissioned officer to the young grenadier: "we must be off Macmanus. We leave you safe, sir; yonder black sharp-shooter will never draw another trigger. Pick up a musket for the gentleman; we must not leave him without the means of keeping stragglers at a distance, should any come prowling here, before the fatigue parties arrive to carry off the wounded. Here, sir, take another pull at the brandy-flask; nothing keeps up a sinking heart so well."

"Thanks, my kind fellow, I owe you a life. Had you left me to yon black scoundrel, he would have served me as he did our comrade there. What are your names—your regiment? I shall take care to report your timely services to—"

The elder of the grenadiers laughed. "You are but a young soldier, sir, and this, as I suspect, your first field. I know you mean us kindly, but silence is the best service you can render us. We should have been with the advance near Genappe, instead of collecting lost property upon the plains of Waterloo. Well, we fought hard enough yesterday to allow us a right to share what no one claims, before the Flemish clowns come here by cock-crow. Adieu!" As he spoke, his companion handed me a musket, after trying the barrel with a ramrod, and ascertaining from flint and pan that it was both loaded and serviceable.

"Enough—I ask no questions. But here are a few guineas."

"Which we do not require," said the sergeant. "We have made a good night's work, and your money, young sir, we neither want nor take. If we have rendered you service, it was for the sake of the old country. It is hard to shut one's ears, when the first language that we lisped in from the cradle asks pity in the field. Farewell, sir, morning comes on apace."

"And yet," I replied, "I might perhaps at sometime serve you. You know the fable. The mouse once cut a net, and saved a lion. I am indeed but a young soldier—but should I be able to be serviceable at any future period, ask for Jack Blake, and he'll remember the night of Waterloo."

"Blake!" said the elder grenadier with sharpness. "Are you from Galway?"

"I am."

"What family? The Blakes are numerous."

"Mine are of Castle Blake."

"Your father's name is Manus," said the serjeant, "if I recollect right?"

"No—he is my uncle. My parent died many years ago—I have no remembrance of him."

The soldier started—"It could not be the same," he muttered; "was he in the army?"

"Yes."

"His rank?"

"A colonel."

"His name?"

"Cæsar."

"Now, by my hopes of mercy!" exclaimed the serjeant, "I would not for all the plunder in the field have parted from you in ignorance. Macmanus, we must remove this gentleman. We will accompany him to Brussels. You and I, comrade, have wounds enough to plead apology for the hospital. You have a gash in the arm, and I a clip upon the skull, and a lance-cut in the shoulder. None of them, Mac, in faith, are mortal, but quite enough to qualify better heroes for the surgeon's hands. Come, sir, let men say what they will, there is a Providence that watches all."

Was it not strange? The man with whom entreaty failed, and money proved unavailing, conveyed me from the field with the tenderness a parent would exhibit to his only boy. Frequently he moistened my lips with brandy, and when nature was exhausted, his powerful strength sustained my sinking frame.

The sun rose rapidly, we gained the ruined causeway that crossed the field of battle—and early as it was, a Flemish peasant was there with his cart. My protector seized the horse, and pointing to Brussels, offered him five Napoleons if he would convey me thither—the Belgian shook his head. Next and best argument, a sabre dyed with recent blood was unceremoniously produced. This seemed conclusive, and the peasant pocketed the money."

I was carefully placed in the rude vehicle, while my companions seated themselves at my side, and supported me by turns. Loss of blood, brandy too liberally administered, fatigue, the revulsion of over-excited spirits, all united to overpower me. I sunk back in the serjeant's arms—and Waterloo, though I crossed its hard-fought field, fades from my memory, and I recollect no more.

## CHAPTER XXV.

I'll tell you who they were, this female pair,  
Lest they should seem princesses in disguise;

\* \* \* \* \*

Mistress and maid; the first the only daughter  
Of an old man.

*Don Juan.*

DIFFICULT as our passage was across the field of battle, our route through the forest of Soignes was still more impracticable. By its solitary causeway a splendid *corps-d'armée* had advanced three mornings since, in all "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war;" now it was choked with broken equipages and dead horses—wounded men toiling slowly toward Brussels for relief—the bodies of many whose life had left them in the attempt—dismounted guns, disabled wagons—caps, drums, sabres, helmets—in short, all the wreck and ruin that the rear of even a victorious army exhibits. Through these mementos of a hard-contested fight, our light cart slowly but safely proceeded; and when I recovered my recollection, I found myself seated on some litter in a handsome street near the Grand Hotel, supported by a grenadier, while a Belgian girl bathed my face with water, and moistened my lips with wine.

I looked wildly round, as a man starts from a troubled dream. I remembered Macmanus instantly: dark and painful associations accompanied this recognition of my deliverer; the field of battle, the dead guardsman, the murdered youth, the black yager—all passed in shadowy succession, and I closed my eyes and fainted.

I was speedily restored, and on other objects my eyes opened. Macmanus was gone; I had been removed from the street: the young Belgian no longer attended me: a pretty English-looking female stood beside the bed, and a middle-aged man held my pulse, and anxiously watched my recovery.

"Where am I?" I exclaimed with a wild stare.

"Hush, my young friend; you are in very kind hands: obey me, keep quiet, and you will be speedily afoot."

"Am I in a hospital?"

"You are far more comfortably situated, was the reply. "The hospitals are crowded; you are under a private roof; there stands your nurse, and I am your physician."

"My sight is bad. Where are the grenadiers?—the private with the wounded arm, and the sergeant that cut down the Prussian sharp-shooter.

"He is wandering," the doctor whispered to the nurse.

"I am not, by Heaven!" I exclaimed passionately. "I saw him stab the officer; there was only a dead horse between us"—and I continued a wild and unconnected tale of facts and fancies, in which Quatre-Bras and Waterloo were mingled with scenes of very different description; and the names of Wellington and O'Moore ridiculously confused with those of Blucher and Lucinda Daly. Gradually, however, my ravings ceased, and under the influence of a powerful narcotic I became composed; love and war disturbed me with their alarms no longer; a deep sleep succeeded, and for twelve hours my repose was calm and unbroken as an infant's.

When I awoke, twilight had set in; another stranger watched me, for a plainly-dressed elderly male servant was peeping through the curtains. It was evident that I was an object of constant and kind solicitude: my head, dressed and bandaged, was resting on a down pillow; my blood-stained linen had been changed; the room was darkened, and those who were in it moved upon tiptoe when they entered or departed.

"Is he awake, Robert?" said the same female whom I had noticed with the physician in the morning.

The person to whom the question was addressed lifted the curtains to look.

"I am not only awake, my good friend," I replied, "but wonderfully recruited with the refreshing sleep I have enjoyed. But where am I?—under what roof?—and to whom am I indebted for this generous attention?" I strove to raise myself upon my elbow; both attendants gently opposed it, and the attempt convinced me of my weakness. No wonder I was feeble; beside the blood I lost upon the field, a considerable quantity had been taken from my arm by order of the doctor.

Two days passed, and I experienced unremitting attention; my wounds assumed a healthy appearance, fever abated, and the medical adviser pronounced that my recovery would be a rapid one. Still I remained ignorant of the name of my benefactor; and on this subject a concealment was observed that seemed unnecessary and inexplicable. Of the country or grade of the person to whom I was so deeply indebted for timely succour, I could only conjecture aught from the style

of their attendants; and I concluded, after a critical examination of the domestics, that they were an English family of respectability not moving in the foremost ranks of fashion. What rendered this mysterious *incognito* of my host so remarkable was, that on every subject beside, Robert, his chief minister, was exceedingly communicative. He was an intelligent person in his way, and acquainted me with the political events and military movements, as they occurred subsequent to the battle.

The third day passed; my strength returned, my curiosity increased, and the mystery remained impenetrable: for every indirect effort to unravel it was unsuccessful. I tried Robert, and he answered my inquiry with a shake of the head, profound enough for Lord Burleigh; the doctor proved inexorable to all entreaty; and Annette, though supplicated by her black eyes and well-turned ankle, was mute as if she had been dumb from the cradle. Was ever anything more provoking? The very sex of my benefactor was unknown: I might be beholden to the bounty of an old bachelor, or under the immediate *surveillance* of a blooming belle. Except this teasing uncertainty, I had nothing to complain of; I was tenderly nursed, everything I required was supplied, and my very wishes were anticipated. My own portmanteaus and dressing-case had been conveyed from my former lodgings: in short, I was most agreeably cantoned, and in all Brussels there was not an invalid so comfortably and so mysteriously circumstanced as myself.

A restless spirit like mine tires of the confinement of a sick room. I had no companions to come in and while away a tedious hour; for my acquaintances in the city were limited to three or four brother officers, and they were more severely wounded than myself; my servant, a private in the Rifles, had fallen on the 16th, skirmishing in the Bois de Bossu; my regiment joined Colville's brigade on the 19th, and pushed forward with the leading division; the soldiers who brought me off the field had disappeared: I was totally deserted, and all around me were strangers, though, in sooth, they were very kind ones.

The third evening came. Once or twice since morning I had heard the tinkle of a guitar, and I felt convinced that the musician was at no great distance from my chamber. Uncertainty became intolerable; I made another attempt upon Annette, and, like the preceding ones, it proved a failure. She coquetted with me freely, but was too guarded to permit

my *bardinage* to extract a particle of information. Again an instrument was touched, and, as I thought, a voice accompanied it. I was dying of curiosity, and implored Annette to relieve it: I swore that my discretion was unbounded, and that the secret should never escape. The *demoiselle* appeared to relent, and of course, I became more eloquent and urgent. She approached the sofa, which I was now stout enough to occupy, and leaned over me; I caught her hand.

"Do, dear, dear Annette, tell me who the lady is—she who plays and sings so prettily?"

"You would betray me to Robert," she whispered archly.

"No, on my soul! You are far too handsome to be ill-natured. Will you not trust me? You must, you will."

"And you can keep a secret?" said the *soubrette*.

"I can indeed!"

"And so can I!" exclaimed the tormenting gipsey, as she tapped my cheek playfully, and ran laughing from the room.

What could I do? Nothing but curse Annette, try to sleep, and thus forget my disappointment.

In half an hour the traitress returned. I was pettish as a school-boy, remained silent on the sofa, and determined to eschew flirtation.

"Hist, captain! surely you can't be sleeping?"

I kept my eyes closed: the attendant advanced on tiptoe, and examined me attentively, while I breathed heavily.

"He took his draught too soon, the simpleton! Well, now is the time!" and she tripped lightly from the room, leaving me, as she believed, "fast as a watchman."

Her absence was but short: she returned, and not alone. I heard a whispering, and the speakers approached me cautiously.

"Well, Miss Emily, am I not a silly girl to run such risk, and gratify your curiosity?"

"How soundly he sleeps!" said a voice so soft and thrilling that I felt the blood rush to my cheeks. "See—how feverish he is!—how his face flushes, Annette!. I fear he is not so well as the doctor thinks him to be."

I would have given a finger for a peep, but feared to open an eyelid, lest the fair visiter should take alarm and fly from the apartment. Was I, then, under the protection of this gentle being? I feared to breathe, lest one syllable she uttered should escape me, while again she addressed the attendant.

"How differently he looks, Annette, to what he did when, on that fearful morning, he was left upon the street bleeding

and lifeless. How I trembled when I requested my father's leave to have him carried in, for fear he would refuse me. Does he sleep long, Annette?"

"Oh, yes, for hours, but that is no reason we should dally. Lord! if Robert found us here, I should lose my place, and, in spite of gout and rheumatism, before midnight struck, you would be hurried off, Heaven knows whither; for a soldier's very name terrifies the old gentleman. Hist! is that a step in the corridor? Come, Miss Emily," and Annette made a movement toward the door.

I ventured to look up: a beautiful girl was leaning over me, and eyes of soft and gentle expression met mine. She started and uttered a half-suppressed exclamation.

"Stay, lady; fear nothing; I would not for worlds alarm you! Permit me but to thank you as I should, and offer you the poor acknowledgment of my gratitude."

I caught her hand; surprise deprived her of the power to leave me; while Annette, thunderstruck at the discovery, vainly endeavoured to disengage her lovely companion from my firm but gentle hold.

"Unhand me, sir!" said the same sweet voice that had fascinated me. "I am punished for my imprudence, and I deserve it: indeed, we thought you were sleeping."

Poor girl, her alarm was pitiable.

"Come, sir!" said Annette, "is this fair?—is it honourable? You little dream what mischief our imprudence and your folly may occasion. Do let my mistress leave this room."

"And shall I never again see you, lady? I may not, dare not, risk offence by detaining you for a moment; you are at perfect liberty. You saved my life; you came, angel-like, to relieve me; may I not thank you? Shall I not, when I quit this couch of sickness, kneel at your feet and bless you as my deliverer?"

"Well, well," exclaimed Annette impatiently; "Miss Emily may not possibly, object hereafter to a visit; but, for Heaven's sake! do not delay us now."

The hand I held in mine trembled—timidly I touched it with my lips—deep burning blushes overspread the loveliest face I had ever looked upon till now; and next moment I was alone, and Emily and her companion had disappeared.

My heart throbbed wildly. And was this my gentle preserver? The mystery was dissolving fast; Annette was now in my power, and I would soon wring the secret from

her. Before many minutes elapsed, other footsteps sounded in the gallery, and Robert, attended by the doctor, entered my apartment.

The latter touched my pulse, seemed astonished, and he pronounced me feverish. This he had not expected; but he would send me a composing draught; and after a brief visit, both retired.

Feverish, indeed, I was; but they little guessed the cause: agitation, and not disease, occasioned it. Weak and nervous as I was, I half imagined the late occurrence a coinage of the brain, and the young and lovely being who visited my chamber, only the splendid creation of excited fancy. But Annette's return realized the whole, and my beautiful visiter was indeed her mistress and my protector.

That night I found it impossible to converse with the *soubrette* in private, as more than once Robert interrupted our *tête-à-tête*. Early next day the hospital director visited, and pronounced me convalescent, and gave me permission to leave my room. My wounds were healing fast, and weakness alone remained. With Robert's assistance I dressed, and was conducted to a lower apartment that looked upon a pretty flower-garden in the rear of the mansion. All day I hoped to gain a passing glimpse of the gentle Emily; but, alas! I hoped in vain. I heard occasionally the tinkle of a guitar; and through the open window, once or twice a voice reached me, whose silver tones could never be mistaken. Robert, as usual, was constant in his attendance; and every delicacy suited to recruit the strength of an invalid was liberally supplied. But no Annette. Where was she? I dared not ask, lest, the question should create suspicion. The day wore heavily through; I thought it endless. At last, evening fell; and when the time arrived when I should retire for the night, Robert lighted me to my chamber, undressed, assisted me to bed, and left me to court repose.

If the gentle god did not descend upon my lids with his accustomed alacrity, I had none but myself to blame; for, if the truth were told, I went to bed the sulkiest gentleman in Brussels.





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